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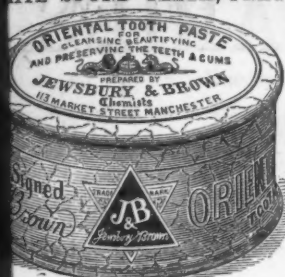
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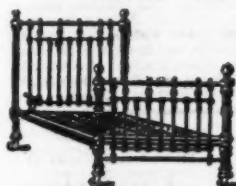
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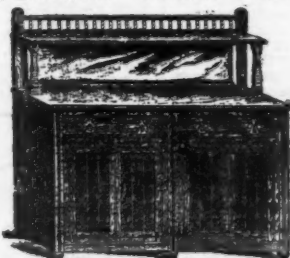


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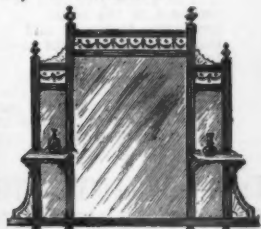
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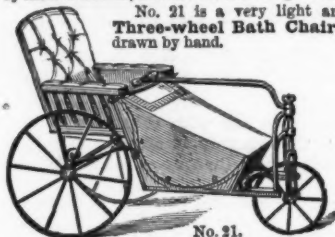
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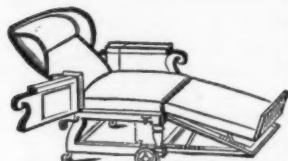


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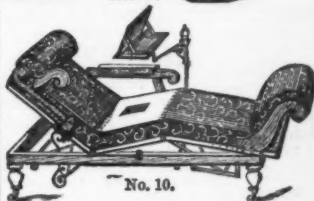
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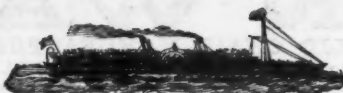


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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1886.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1886.

Children of Gibeon.

BY WALTER BESANT,

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EARTHLY TRACT SOCIETY.

IN this informal way, merely by conversation on a bench in Victoria Park, was formed a Partnership which has already accomplished so considerable a work. It seems, now that we can look back from the vantage ground of a few months' history, a natural result of Valentine's Great Renunciation and Claude's Great Surrender. And although the thing is spreading far and wide, it must not be forgotten that it was originally intended for the most obscure and the least-known quarter of London, a place quite hidden away and forgotten, concerning which nothing has ever been written, and for which nothing worthy of the chronicler has ever been attempted. Who could look for great things out of Hoxton? In that respect it may compare with a certain little city of Galilee.

The complete history of this Partnership will doubtless be some day written in detail. It is nothing less than a chapter in Political Economy, and belongs to that important section of the science which shows how tendencies have been mistaken for laws: how selfishness, avarice, greed, knavery, cheater, and injustice have been considered the great and beneficent purpose of Creation,

and tricks of Trade have been taken as forming part of the Eternal Reign of Law.

It is, in fact, the story how the supposed Laws of Humanity may be modified by simple acts of Humanity. This, if they were indeed laws, is exactly as if the Laws of Gravitation could be suspended or reversed by a simple effort of the human will. And as the ideas of the Partnership are spreading, and have already got outside Ivy Lane and have invaded Clinger Street, Hemsworth Road, Bacchus Walk, and James Street, and are now crossing the Kingsland Road into Haggerston, and have leaped across the canal into Islington and Dalston, and are stirring the sluggish blood of Goswell Road, it is only just to Valentine that the truth about the beginning of the New Gospel—after all only a natural outcome of the old—should be clearly stated.

Great ideas grow quickly in the brains where they are first inspired, especially if they are assisted by a Partnership of the only true kind—namely, a male and female partnership; for the masculine mind at its best is as prolific of ideas as a sunflower is of seeds or an oak of acorns. It puts them forth freely and without stint, while the feminine mind receives such of them as it catches, and nurses them tenderly while they are yet young, watching them grow, placing them in the sunshine, keeping them from East winds until they are able to go alone and need her care no longer. There have been Partnerships where the reverse process has been attempted, but purely feminine ideas have proved to be weakly sickly things, and man is never a good nurse. It does not do to fly in the face of nature. Some day there will be some such partnerships as this in Art, and especially in the Art of Fiction, whereby for the first time the true woman may be revealed to the admiring man, and the true man to the admiring woman. As yet it has been given unto us only partially to discern the working of the feminine mind, and to understand darkly that it works on lines wholly different from our own. There are so many great ideas—just as there are so many acorns—that by this time there should be nothing left in the way of Human endeavour to discover or to do. Unfortunately, just as there are so many acorns which never come to oaks, so there are so many great ideas which perish in the very inception or first beginning of them. Some are gobbled up by the pigs—those, namely, which are too generous for contemporary mankind; some fall on rocks—those, namely, which are in advance of their generation; some in ditches where they are choked by weeds—those be they which are uttered

in humble and lowly place; some fall among the crowd, which is busy in buying and selling, and so heed them not, but trample them under foot; and some fall into running streams and are carried out into rivers and so into the Ocean and are lost—these are ideas which are proclaimed at the wrong time, as when, during a time of war, a man shall go about preaching peace. The loss of all these ideas is a dreadful hindrance to progress. Another is the inconceivable stupidity of that blind, deaf-and-dumb race known as the ‘Other People.’ What a world—what a wonderful and beautiful world—could we create in a year or two but for the Other People! All the wars, all the injustices, all the blunders, and all the crimes are due to the Other People. But for them we should unite, combine, agree, concert, devise, and execute such things as the world has never yet seen. It is for this long-eared race that statesmen make pledges, promises, and assurances; they have eyes which see not and ears which hear not; they are idolaters, and worship one man, one formula, one idea; and for stiff-neckedness, for continual lusting after things which they ought not to desire, they are worse than the Israelites in their most palmy days.

‘What next, Claude?’

‘What next, indeed! What first?’

‘To begin with then, I know quantities of people in Ivy Lane. I can ask questions without giving offence. They are all friendly with me, and they don’t think that I am working for them.’

‘I suppose nobody likes being worked for,’ said Claude. ‘Suppose the working-man were to form a society for the reformation of higher-class manners. It would be irritating to know that hundreds of men and women were going about in the West End trying to raise one—the Low Level one—to a higher level. How would you like it, Valentine, if you knew that worthy people were wearing blue ribbons solely in order to make you temperate? How should you like to be invited to tea and addresses for your moral good?’

‘I should be very angry.’

‘So I dare say will your friends in Ivy Lane become if we let them suspect that we are working for them. Patience, Valentine, and let us get the facts.’

‘It is in my favour,’ she said, ‘that I do not belong to any of the well-known organisations of parish religious societies—Church or Chapel. People do not suspect me of wanting them to do something or believe something, since I neither wear a monastic

dress nor belong to the religious missions. I am not expected to rebuke nor to admonish, which makes a great difference.'

She might also have explained that there were certain graces of manner peculiar to her which greatly assisted her and softened the hearts of the people and would not permit them to be brutal.

There stands a little chapel in Ivy Lane, of which mention has already been made. It is quite a modest little structure, yet proud, and justly proud, of the purity with which the Christian doctrines have always been proclaimed here to the people by faithful ministers who have never felt the least need of worldly learning. It is complete though so small; there is a gallery in it; one window with a circular head at the back and two in front. There is also a harmonium, and there is a table on which a desk stands and does duty for a pulpit on Sundays. It holds at least forty people without counting the gallery. One of the first things the Partners did was to engage this chapel for week-day services of a different kind. Here Valentine placed a piano, and invited all the ladies of Ivy Lane to come and to bring their babies, on certain evenings, when she gave them tea, and sang to them; and sometimes the Doctor, who had a manly bass, sang too, or gave recitations; and sometimes Claude read. The women came first, because it was a new thing and pleasant; then some of them got tired of the singing and the reading, and wanted the perfect freedom of their own tongues, and returned to the open court again. But some there were—there is always a leaven—who preferred the peace and the good behaviour in this chapel to the noise outside. It was from these quiet women that Valentine gathered, bit by bit, the real life of the poor. You may talk to such people for hours together without hearing anything at all, and then, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, and perhaps from the most stupid person in the world, you will get a single hint, a fact, a suggestion, which makes your heart leap up because it explains a thousand things, and shows the way clear and certain where it was formerly hidden by the bushes.

Very well; anybody can hire a hall and play and sing to people. The Kyrle Society are always doing it, with admirable results. That is to say, the people are pleased, and go away, and are not in the smallest degree stimulated to learn singing and playing for themselves. If this is all the Partnership and the Great Renunciation and the Surrender has been able to effect, Valentine might as well have remained among her own friends and merely married an Earl or a Viscount, and Claude might as well have

stayed where he was and merely become in course of time Lord Chancellor. But there are other things, though some of them belong to a later period, after her first three months of exile were finished, and she had gone home and returned again. Besides, it is in the nature of every healthy human thing to grow and of every truly spiritual thing to grow without knowing the decay which presently falls upon things of the flesh. The purpose which began with nothing more than the study of three working girls, widened until it covered the whole wide and terrible subject of women's wrongs; when Valentine called for the assistance of Claude it was in the hope of redressing some of those wrongs. But man's intellect tends to roam and woman's to concentrate; and, as the former is the stronger, so Purpose grows.

'Don't you think, Claude,' said Valentine one day, 'don't you think that a person even in these days may get a Revelation—that is, a perfectly true idea?'

'Why not? Every true thing is a Revelation, I suppose. You have a new thing in your own mind?'

'Is it new? It is this—if everybody knew all that science can teach, there would be no suffering or disease, would there?'

'No, I suppose not, if science could learn new things as fast as they could teach them to the people.'

'And if they knew everything in morals there would be no wicked men, would there?'

'The only original sin is ignorance. Your idea is not quite new, yet it is new enough for us. Go on, Valentine.'

'It is new to me.'

'Huxley has compared life to a game of chess with an invisible opponent who knows every move of the game, and takes advantage of his knowledge. If you make a false move he crushes you without the least remorse.'

'I did not mean anything quite so grand as that. I meant something much simpler. Such as that people ought to be clean and to keep their houses clean; they ought to take care of their own health; they ought to be temperate and thrifty; they ought to get fresh air; they ought to practise self-control——'

'All this is perfectly true. But——'

'Wait a little, Claude. I cannot put things quite like Professor Huxley. They have been told, I suppose, that they ought to do all these things. But then they have not been told why. Do you think if they knew the reasons for obeying that they would go on disobeying laws?'

'You have not said all that is in your mind, Valentine.'

'Not quite. If you told me not to go across a field but round its sides I might obey or I might not. If you proved to me that I must not cross the field because there was a great shaking quagmire in the middle which would swallow me up, I should certainly not cross the field.'

'I begin to perceive, my Partner, that you have got hold of a practical idea.'

'It came of something you said the other day, Claude,' she said, blushing with the pleasure of having really thought of something.

'Of course. Adam once laid all the blame on Eve, and she has been giving him all the praise ever since.'

'Well—perhaps—I do not know—things may be so connected that it would be easier to move the men in the right direction if we first endeavoured to make them more careful about their homes.'

'You connect the women with the home, of course.'

'Do you really think my idea, though it may not be at all new, may be worth considering? Should we begin by teaching people something? Oh! we are getting on so slowly.'

'Do not be despondent, Valentine. We shall get on slowly though we give all our lives to the task. We have got to accomplish something well-nigh impossible. We have got to find out if anything can possibly be done to improve the condition of our friends. As for that quagmire illustration of yours it is almost as good as the chess comparison. But who is to make the people understand it?'

'You, Claude, of course.'

Claude laughed. 'Of course I can do everything. Well, I obey. The real Augean stable, I am quite sure, was Ivy Lane, and the river which was turned into it was the Regent's Canal. It was, in those days, called the River of Knowledge.'

It was from this conversation that the great Earthly Tract Association first had its origin. Attempts have been made, I know, to connect the foundation of this most remarkable Society with other people, and many go about professing themselves to have been the Founders. But the real Founder was none other than Valentine; the first members were only herself and Claude; they began with the expenditure of half-a-sovereign and the printing of a single tract, which Valentine gave to her friends, the women of Ivy Lane; they wrote all the earlier tracts themselves,

though it was very early in their history that the Doctor joined them. Little by little more tracts were written and distributed ; then they began to re-write the first tracts, which naturally attempted too much, and they recast their original design. How the thing grew and extended itself in all directions ; how people from Manchester and Birmingham and Bradford, where they are always open to ideas, heard of these tracts, and sent for them, and for more ; how the tracts began to be spoken about ; how wealthy people gave them money, and the sale of the tracts brought in more money, and how they were obliged to have an office and to take in clerks, and how that office is spreading into a great warehouse, and the tracts are being translated into all languages, and how it will very shortly become a vast building on the Thames Embankment—all this is history which has to be written in the immediate future when the Earthly Tract Society shall have done its work and scattered knowledge over the whole world, as the late Professor Holloway scattered his advertisements, and shall have taught people in simple language the Conduct of Life. ‘If,’ said the original Prospectus of the Society, ‘people had taken as much pains to spread the knowledge of things in general as they have taken to spread the knowledge of one form of the Christian Faith—which they might have done, and not left the other undone—the general ignorance would be by this time as good as gone ; it would have been swept away as by a mop and a bucket.’

‘The whole of the English-speaking world—that is to say, the educated and the uneducated—clearly understand the Christian creed as it is expounded by the Evangelical Party ; and this, not because the people all go to church, which they do not, nor because they read books, for they never read any book ; nor because these things are presented to them in the papers, which is not the case, for the papers preserve silence on these subjects ; nor is it due to their home influences, which make more for the derision of all religions than for the defining of any particular form ; nor to their schools, because catechisms are no longer taught in them ; but wholly, solely, and entirely to the dissemination of Tracts. Would you, therefore’—one is still quoting from the Prospectus—‘make the people wise in the Conduct of Life ? Write Tracts, give them simple rules of life and the reasons for them. Then distribute these Tracts broadcast among the people, from street to street and from house to house—keep on distributing Tracts. Prepare a Tract, or a Series of Tracts, for every virtue and for every vice, setting forth as faithfully as the Religious Tracts

have done for many years, the true Doctrine and the consequence of violating its laws.'

'The first thing,' said Claude, while this Prospectus was under consideration, 'is to write the Tracts.'

'That of course, Claude, you will do.'

'Of course, Valentine, I am an encyclopædia.'

'You can consult an encyclopædia. Let us begin at once.'

'We will form ourselves,' said Claude, 'into an Association. You shall be the President, I will be the Secretary; we will call ourselves the Earthly Tract Society, to distinguish ourselves from the older Association, which has never attempted the improvement of the world in comfort, culture, and manners. I think the name sounds well and will carry weight. And now, Valentine, let us begin to set down some of the Tracts we shall want and to give them their titles.'

Let no one think it an easy matter to write a tract. Many of the earlier ones, for instance, those that were first issued, proved quite useless, because they were pitched a note too high or a note too low. A Tract must have a definite thing to say, and it must say that thing with great vigour and plainness, and without the least chance of mistake; the propositions laid down must be, if possible, those which are not capable of denial; and they must be stated with attractiveness. No Tract, for instance, must contain a theory or anything which may be argued against. Every Tract must also be short; and perhaps it is as well that there should be half a dozen Tracts on the same subject; it is well, also, that the Tract should be signed, because people like a man who is not afraid to advance his opinions. Sometimes a dialogue may prove the most useful way of presenting the subject—sometimes a fable, sometimes a story, sometimes a piece of history; in fact there is no form of literature which may not be pressed into the service of the Earthly Tract Association, except Satire. This would be a perfectly useless weapon when employed against the habits of the working classes. One might as well address them in Greek or Hebrew.

The most successful of the early series were, I think, all written by the Partnership, and among them, especially, were the Domestic series. It began with the Tract on Wives, meaning the right Treatment of a Wife, with her husband's plain duties towards her; the corresponding Paper on Husbands; on Children, with a Parent's duty to his offspring; on Language, the word used in its popular sense, and with special reference to the use of the

Universal Adjective; on the House; on Woman's clothes; on Dinners; on clean Streets; on Water; on Fresh Air; on Amusements; on Holidays; on Beer; on Pretty Things; on Dressing the Hair; on Boots; on Wages, high and low; in the last-named tract the working men are first approached, but with great delicacy, on the subject of permitting their girls to take less wages than will keep a girl strong and healthy; on Hours of Work; and so on. When the Doctor became associated with them he contributed the well-known Tracts on certain forms of disease, and how they may be prevented; on certain elementary principles of Physiology; on Food, and what should be eaten; on Exercise; on Tobacco; and many others. It was later that the Series of Tracts appeared which dealt with the duties and privileges of an English subject; it was from these papers that the English workman learned for the first time, with considerable astonishment, what neither his school nor his newspaper had taught him, the prodigious extent and wonderful history of his own country, how it grew, and how it must be preserved and developed, his own inheritance in the world and what it means to be an Englishman. The latest Tracts of all are those on the Co-operation of men and women, and if these tracts are to bring about the Doctor's Universal League of Labour, it will be interesting to watch that body and to consider its ways. One need hardly stop to notice the very remarkable effect of the Tracts upon Ivy Lane, because they are already well known, and the place has now become a Show Street. The houses are as beautifully clean as a Dutch village, the blinds are white, the little chapel has become a Concert and Dancing-room, the Adelaide Tavern is the Street Club; there are flowers in every window, and these are clean; within, the floors are scrubbed, walls are dusted, water is filtered; the men have quite left off getting drunk; they never swear unless the situation demands strong and plain words; they do not beat their wives; the women do not scream and fly into rages; quarrelling among them is almost unknown; all alike have grown critical over their meat, their beer, their tea, their coffee, their bread, and their dress; every family saves something every week; and the Universal Adjective has quite fallen into contempt, though, I confess, it may still be heard in other parts of London.

More important still is the growth and development of the Institution founded to run side by side with the Earthly Tract Society, that of the Street Committees. Every street has now its own committee, elected by the inhabitants. Up to the present time their functions have been almost entirely sanitary; but they

are gradually invading the region of morals, and they are already the terror of the dustman and the dread of the vestry, and the cause why landlords blaspheme. Besides, other streets have followed the example of Ivy Lane. There is, as mentioned above, a Movement in Clinger Street; there is a shaking in Myrtle Row, and Bacchus Walk has already elected its Committee. It is to the Street Committees that the Earthly Tract Society look most confidently for the carrying out of their most ambitious projects. For in morals and in sanitary measures, and in the general Conduct of Life, nothing can be forced on the people which the people have not resolved upon getting for themselves. But consider the possibilities of a Street Committee. Where would the wicked man find a home if the Street Committee be watchful for righteousness? Where would the Fenian and the Dynamiter rest their heads if the Street Committee refuse to receive them? What will be the fate of that landlord who refuses to keep his houses in repair? What that of the tenant who refuses to do his share of the cleaning-up work? And how long, think you, will the Street Committees suffer the women to live under the Law of Eleven pence Ha'penny? There will come a time—one sees it already in the close future—when the pickpocket shall find no home anywhere, and the burglar no place to store his swag and keep his jemmy; when all evil-doing shall be driven out of the land, and faith, goodness, charity, hope, and the love of beauty and the desire for Art shall spring up like flowers in the sunny month of June, and the men shall at last join hands and shall swear by the Living God the women shall no longer be robbed and wronged.

Moses, as we know, proceeded on the method of inculcating all his laws and precepts together—the Earthly at the same time as the Heavenly. But then he had a Chosen People, and even with them the result of this method did not yield results by any means so satisfactory as might have been desired. Perhaps Claude and Valentine were wise in their generation when they made their people clean first and taught the nobler truths next, and left religion to those who profess religion.

But I am sorry to say that the Assistant Priest of St. Agatha's refused to assist in writing the Tracts, or in their distribution, because they were not in the first place put under the protection of the Church, and because poverty and disease were treated as things which might be removed by wise treatment, and nothing was said about the duty of Discipline, Confession, and Penance, and because the Institution of Lent was left out of the programme altogether.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STEP WITHOUT.

ABOUT a fortnight after that strange and terrifying dream came to Mrs. Monument, and when she had at length completely shaken off the horror of it and nearly forgotten to dread its return, it did come again, like some foul spirit who refuses to be laid. It came just as before, with the sound of a remembered footfall. There is no one single man in the whole habitable globe who is not unlike every other man as regards every single feature, detail, and particular of mind and of body. For instance, you may secure the identification of a man for life by taking an impression on wax of his forefinger or thumb, because the curves and corrugations of the skin differ with every man and are peculiar to him. Each of us is individual, and stands alone in the universe—in complete isolation—a thing curious and terrifying to consider. Most marked of all is a man's footstep, which, once recognised, can never be mistaken or forgotten. So that, when that dead man's footstep came again, Mrs. Monument was stricken with a terror unspeakable, and tenfold worse than on the first occasion. It came in the daytime, too, when such things are never expected. If the spirits of the dead walk, it is at night and in the dark, though even then it is not usual nor is it recorded of any that they Walk in boots and reproduce the old familiar footstep. I have never yet heard this thing of any Ghost nor have I ever yet seen any who Walked in boots. There have been instances—but they are few—of daylight apparitions, but tradition and custom have established a prejudice against the mixture of sunshine with the spirit world. This is the reason why the Supernatural Terror—a thing quite apart from any other feeling—is so much more terrible by day than by night. A Nightmare we know: not a pleasant creature, but familiar, and an old acquaintance in whatever form it comes. But a Daymare—that, if you please, is a thing so uncommon and of such rare experience that it belongs to the category of Nameless Things which follow after the long list of devils, imps, ghosts, elves, fiends, Afreets, Jinns, and spectres which possess and enjoy, like Peers of Great Britain, their titles and ranks.

It was in the evening, but before sunset. The old lady had taken her tea and sent Rhoda home. She expected her daughter

Polly, and she sat in her great chair beside the empty fireplace, knitting in hand, waiting with the stolid patience of the blind. The evening was warm, and, after a comfortable tea, one may sometimes experience a fuller sense of comfort than is generally the lot of mortals, and Mrs. Monument was just then completely free from rheumatism, and had no other kind of ache, pain, or disease either beginning or going on or coming to an end, which is unusual when a person reaches the age of sixty. All these causes combined made Mrs. Monument drop her eyes and her knitting, one after the other, and persuaded her to nod her head with the Royal Condescension only to be observed at such moments, and then to let her soul lie down and be at rest, while her eyes dropped and her lips opened. Mrs. Monument was fast asleep.

She slept peaceably for half an hour. The Almshouses were always quiet behind their brick wall, but to-day all the Collegians, except herself, were out basking in the sun, which is a perfect cure for everything when you can get enough of it; and the place was absolutely silent and peaceful. The continual rolling outside of carriages and carts, the tramp of the footsteps on the pavement, were audible, it is true, because they were going on all day long, and the greater part of the night, just on the other side of the wall, but no one in the houses ever heard them or noticed them, nor did they break the slumbers of the lightest sleeper, nor did they add anything to the most grievous headache.

Suddenly Mrs. Monument awoke with a cry. She started and sat upright, with pale cheek and outstretched arms, and blind eyes which rolled helplessly around.

‘The step! I heard his step again.’

She listened. But it did not come again. There was the rolling of the tramcar and the jingling of its bells; there was the rumbling of heavy waggons; there was the whistle of an engine on the railway; there were the steps of passengers; there was a barrel-organ; there was the whistling of a boy. But there was not the step which had awakened her. It was a single and solitary step; a step like Robinson Crusoe’s impression of one—only one—foot on the sand—a single footfall—a mysterious footfall—where was the other foot? Was it a one-legged Seven League Boot? Mrs. Monument sat listening for another, but no other touched her ears.

Then she sprang to her feet, and with every outward sign of terror, with trembling hands and parted lips, she began to grope and feel about the room, stopping every moment to listen, lest the

step should fall again and should escape her. But she could find nothing; she could hear nothing; as for the footstep, she would have heard it, she thought, fifty yards away. Why, she had heard it once before—the footstep which had been silent for twenty years, but which she never could forget; once before it smote her ear in the middle of the night, and now in daytime, close beside her, in the very room she heard it—a soft and gentle step which she could not mistake.

She felt about the open door; she came out into the little court and stretched her hands out as if in search of space illimitable.

‘It was the Dream,’ she murmured. ‘It was the Dream come back again. But there was some one in the room. I know there was some one in the room.’

She knew it by the instinct of the blind, who feel the presence of things without seeing or touching them.

And while she stood there, a pitiful spectacle of fear and horror, the latch of the gate was lifted and her daughter Polly came into the closed garden of the almshouse.

Mrs. Monument was wrong. It was no dream. She had heard her husband’s footstep, because he was standing before her, looking her full in the face. He was not dead at all, but alive. And he was enlarged; they had suffered him to go free; he was released with a document entitled, after the name of a celebrated Play, the ‘Ticket of Leave.’ He had called a day or two after his release to see his wife, as a husband should, after nearly twenty years of separation. She was, on that occasion, gone to bed; and so he came away. Business, that is to say, an eager and wolflike pursuit of pleasure and drink after twenty years of abstinence, kept him away for a whole fortnight. Now, his money being well-nigh spent, he called again.

A little while before Mrs. Monument woke up so suddenly and cried out, and began to carry on in so surprising a manner all by herself, there came along the road, on the east side of it, where the sunshine falls in the afternoon and evening, and where, for that charitable reason, they have planted most of the almshouses, a man somewhat advanced in years. He was dressed neatly in a sober grey tweed suit, and wore a round hat. He was slightly built, and a little below the middle height; a thin, spare man with sharp features and small delicate hands; his hair was short and quite grey, and his cheek was smooth shaven. His features were small and fine, especially his mouth;

his eyes were bright and surrounded with quite a cobweb of crow's feet and wrinkles. He had something the appearance of a gentleman's servant, a butler in a great house, a hall porter in a club, or something extremely respectable in the Service, and therefore he seemed out of place in a region where there are few gentlemen's servants kept, and where clubs are unknown except for political purposes. Certainly a most respectable person, with a little awkwardness about his manner of walking as if he was a stranger to crowded streets. Presently he stopped in front of a low brick wall with a gate in the middle of it and hesitated. Then he lifted the latch, opened the gate and stepped within, where was the garden of the almshouses, and behind the garden the row of cottages.

The man turned to the right and walked straight to the last of the cottages, that, namely, which belonged to Mrs. Monument. It might have been noticed by an observant person that he walked almost noiselessly, an art which may be acquired by anybody, but it requires study and much practice. When you have acquired it you have also acquired the Stealthy Style, much spoken of by the better class of novelists, those, namely, whose publishers sell their productions at a penny the Complete Novelette. This style may be of advantage to some kinds of professional men, especially if, as this gentleman was, they happen to be burglars by profession. When the man reached the door of the cottage, which stood wide open, he looked in. Beside the empty fireplace in her chair sat an old woman with white hair, asleep.

The man looked at her curiously.

'She is changed,' he murmured. 'I wonder if she will know me, and I wonder what she will say when she sees me? I wonder if she knows I am alive.'

He stepped inside noiselessly and looked about the little room. The woman still slept undisturbed. There was nothing in the room worth stealing if he wished to steal; nor was there anything particularly interesting to look at; but his eyes fell upon the shelf of books, and he nodded with a kind of satisfaction. So long as the books—his books—were there, he was not forgotten. On the table was some knitting work and needles in a basket, and lying with the work a torn envelope. He took this out—being an extremely curious person—and read the address upon it. 'Claude Monument, Esq., 25 King's Bench Walk, Temple.' It had been, in fact, left there by Valentine.

Claude Monument! He remembered now; there was a son of his named Claude—Claude Duval. The boy was living, then, or at least working in the Temple where the lawyers live; perhaps a lawyer's clerk. His own son a lawyer's clerk! Strange Irony of Fate! He folded the letter and placed it carefully in his pocket. It might be useful. This man was none other, in fact, than the great James Carey himself, once the acknowledged head of his Profession, formerly the Prince of Burglars. And he was set loose again upon an unsuspecting world after twenty years of seclusion. When such a man as James Carey is set free the world ought to be warned. It was his step that the poor woman of the almshouses had actually heard in the evening. He had come; he had found the room dark and empty, and he had gone away again. Now he was come back to make his release known to his affectionate family, and to look around. Twenty years of prison fare and life do not make a man inclined for honest work; and if there was any money to be got out of his wife and children, before 'jobs' began to offer themselves again, he might as well get that money.

Perhaps he stepped upon a loose plank; perhaps he forgot his habitual caution—I know not—but suddenly the woman started in her sleep, sat bolt upright, and shrieked, 'His step! I hear his step again!'

In an instant he saw that his wife was blind; her glaring eyes rolled over him so to speak as if he was not present; he saw her blindness in her outstretched hands and gestures of helplessness. The thing was quite unexpected, but with quick step and without the least noise, he crossed the threshold, stepped over the flagstones, and took up his position among the cabbage stumps outside, where he waited and watched.

His wife was blind and in an almshouse. He had made up his mind that there would be changes. People do not stand still; the children would be grown up; perhaps they would be ashamed of their father; their mother, he knew, regarded his exploits with a most extraordinary and unaccountable prejudice. He had no doubt that she had tried to make them respectable, whereas, if he had had his way with the children, there would not have been in the whole world a cleverer or a more successful gang of plunderers, a more united and happy family, or one which lived more merrily and enjoyed more abundantly the fruits of the earth—other people's fruits, of course—in due season. Shame, that a man should not be permitted, even in prison, to direct the education of his own

children in their own interests. But if they were respectable and unwilling to own their father, he must then—he had thought it all out—he must compel them to pay for his silence and suppression by a weekly subsidy. But who would have thought that his wife would go blind? He did not know what to say or how to act, and therefore he did nothing, but watched.

She came tottering to the door and stretched out her arms to the world, crying ‘Who is there? Who is there?’

The man made no reply. He had fully intended to present himself, and to say, ‘Here I am, back again. Give me all the money you have got in the place. Tell me where all the children are. I shall want money till I get back to my old work. As for repentance, don’t think of it, and as for talking, stow it.’ This was the amiable speech he had proposed to make. But his wife was blind as well as grey, and, for some spark of humanity still lurking in his breast, he could not make that speech. While he stood among the cabbage stumps there suddenly appeared between his wife and himself a third person—a young lady.

‘Mother,’ she said, taking the blind woman’s hand, ‘what is it? Oh! what is it?’ For she connected the terror and the helpless hands with the strange man standing, silent, opposite to the door.

‘It’s the dream come back. Oh! Polly, thank God you’ve come, my dear! It’s the dreadful dream. I heard his step a fortnight ago, in the night—once—only once—upon the stones, and again I heard it just now—once. My dear, my dear, I’m frightened out of my wits. Is it the dead come back to plague me?’

‘The step again?’

‘Your father’s step, my dear. And Something there was in the room. I felt it. Something in the room. His ghost most likely.’

Valentine turned upon the man a face so full of horror, and loathing, and shame, that it actually pierced him to the heart, though his conscience was long since seared with a hot iron, and twenty years of prison had only hardened him. Yet those eyes made him shiver, and he dropped his own.

‘What a strange thing!’ She kept her eyes upon the man as one keeps his eye upon a wild beast. ‘You are sure you heard his step?’

‘Quite sure. As if I could ever forget his step.’ The man smiled complacently. ‘I heard it on the boards, falling as soft as the step of a cat. And oh! Polly—thank God you’ve come,’ she repeated, clinging to her daughter.

'Why, mother,' she replied, in a strange voice and with burning cheeks, 'he is dead long ago—five years ago;' she held up a warning finger to the man. 'Thank Heaven! the miserable, wretched man died in his miserable, wretched prison, where he deserved to die, and was buried in the prison churchyard, where he deserved to be buried, among the thieves and rogues, his companions. Don't tremble so, mother: he is dead, we have forgotten him and all his villanies.'

'Yes, my dear, yes. But your own father, my dear. Don't speak ill of your father and your mother, because it brings bad luck. And him dead too. But why did I hear his step?'

'I don't know. There is nobody here, dear,' she said mendaciously, and with another warning gesture with her forefinger. 'You were dreaming again. Now go back and sit down and calm yourself. As for me, I am going to get you something for your supper—a lettuce, I think. Yes, I will be back in five minutes. Go and sit down, dear. Oh! you poor, dear old thing, what a fright you have had! Sit down now. I am here, you know, and if anybody offered to frighten you, I would—I would kill him.' She said this with such ferocity in her eyes that the man in the garden trembled.

She placed the old woman in her chair. Then she went outside again, and silently beckoned the man to follow her. He obeyed her, walking among the vegetables, where his footsteps were not heard.

Outside the place, Valentine took the first turning to the right, which happened to be a new street of grey-brick houses not yet finished. Nobody ever walks in unfinished streets of grey-brick houses, not even lovers, who will walk anywhere else, but not in unfinished streets, between lines of dreadful grey bricks. On Sundays the jerry-builder walks there alone and wonders how long his houses are likely to stand.

Presently she stopped and turned fiercely upon the man.

'Oh! wretch!' she cried, 'I know who you are. Oh! mean and skulking wretch! We thought you were dead; we rejoiced that you died, like a miserable rat in a trap, in your prison cell, and were buried in the prison churchyard.'

'What do you mean?'

'Silence! Don't dare to speak. Let me think.'

For she understood that the most dreadful thing in the world that could happen to them had happened. Dreadful to every one of them. To the poor old lady, to Joe, the honest and respectable

Joe, who had nothing but his good name, to Sam, to Melenda, and, most dreadful of all, to Claude, and—no, no—Violet must never know, whatever else happened, whoever else suffered. She understood what this man meant, and she was filled with wrath because she was not his daughter.

‘You are not dead, then; and the first use you make of your liberty is to terrify your wife. You ought to have slunk into some corner where no one knew you, and buried your shameful head there till you died. Oh! I know your story, your miserable, disgraceful story.’

‘You called her mother,’ he said, stupidly staring, ‘and you’re a young lady, likely, or perhaps only a young lady’s-maid.’

She made no reply.

‘If she’s your mother, you must be my daughter.’

Again she made no reply.

‘And a precious dutiful daughter she’s made you.’ He cleared his throat and began to pluck up his spirits. ‘I’ll have it out of her for this. You mind that. I’ll have it out of her, and I’ll have it out of you, too—both of you—all of you.’ He stopped to swear a little—just a little—meaning to swear a great deal before he finished. ‘Now, then, where’s your obedience? Where’s your Fifth Commandment?—before I take and wring your undutiful and impudent neck?’

He did use much stronger language, but that was the substance of his remarks, and the rest may be understood. He also doubled his fist and shook it in Valentine’s face, but not with much confidence.

‘If you dare to touch me with your little finger,’ said Valentine, ‘I will shake you to a jelly, you miserable creature!’

She was taller than this slight, small-limbed man, and a good deal heavier. Moreover, there was in her eyes a light of wrath so lurid, and on her cheeks such a fiery glow, and she looked so remarkably as if she could do it, and would rejoice in doing it, that the man was cowed. But he looked dangerous.

‘Well, then, you’re my daughter, I suppose,’ he went on sulkily. ‘What’s your name?’

‘I am called Polly,’ she replied, with some hesitation. ‘Your youngest child was baptized Marla.’

‘A pretty Marla you are,’ he said. ‘This comes of a girl growing up without a father’s care. And how do I know what you do for a living? Marla—yes, I remember now. One forgets a many things in quod. Marla it was. I made up the name

myself from a beautiful book about pirates and scuttlin' ships, and fighting with marlin-spikes—they don't keep them books in quod. And the other gal was Melenda. And that name I made, too. I forget how I made that name—Mile End, was it? Mile End in the book?—I forget. And there was three boys—Joe was the eldest—and Sam and Claude; a pretty boy Claude was. Like me he was. I chose his name, too, after Claude Duval, the Prince of Highwaymen.'

Valentine shuddered. Yes, Claude *was* like him; and so, alas! was Violet. The likeness was unmistakable.

'Come,' he said, 'don't go on like a she-devil. I'm back again. You can't get over that. Let's be jolly. Lord! I don't want quarrels. I never did. Your mother'll tell you that I was always a man for peace and quietness, if such was to be had with my bacca and my grog, or it might ha' been my port wine and my sherry wine. And you're a pretty girl, my dear, with a fine spirit of your own. There! I respect you for it. You're the girl to stand up for your mother, ain't you, now? Kiss your old father, Marla, my dear.'

He made as though he was about to kiss her. Valentine—I shudder; one cannot choose but shudder—Valentine shrank back, and, with a cry of disgust, actually lifted her hand and struck the man on the cheek with so hearty a goodwill that he reeled. King Richard Lion Heart never dealt a better stroke. That this wretched convict, this common felon, should offer to kiss her!

'Oh!' she cried, 'if you dare to touch me, I will kill you.'

The man picked up his hat which had fallen off and stared stupidly. That a girl should chastise her own father!

'Oh! what a pity, what a thousand pities,' Valentine went on pitilessly, 'that you are not dead.'

He began to whine, holding his hat in his hand, and addressing the unsympathetic grey bricks and the scaffolds.

'I return home,' he complained, 'after twenty years. The moment I am out I hurry to my wife's humble home. I have put off the old man, and am resolved to lighten her lot and cheer her declining years, which is a shadow of things to come. I am full of repentance, and count all things else but loss, as I frequently told the good chaplain. My feet are now shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, and I walk in love. I told him that too, and he believed it'—the man actually grinned. Then he became serious again. 'As for my character, my only anxiety is

to redeem it ; and having been a brand ready for the burning, but now plucked from the fire, I expected treatment accordingly. And this is what I get ! A daughter who calls me names, and strikes her old father. Strikes her poor, old, grey-headed, infirm, tottering father. But I offer the other cheek.' He did so ostentatiously, but Valentine took no advantage of the offer. 'This is the Christian spirit of my child. Take the other cheek. It may kill me. But take it. I have had my faults ; I own that I have had faults ; but I always loved my children. Let me go to your mother, Marla. She will receive me in a better spirit. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. Let me find out my four other dear children. There is Samuel—my son Samuel. I hope he is given to virtuous courses. And Melenda—my dear pretty Melenda. I pray that she is a Christian and a Churchgoer, and all a penitent and forgiven father, who has worked out his sentence, and got a good character again, can hope to find. And there is Claude——'

'Stop!' cried Valentine imperiously.

He obeyed, watching her with furtive and evil looks.

'I know,' Valentine continued, after a little reflection, 'that you can talk. You deceived your poor wife by your lies and your glib talk into marrying you. Let us have no more speeches. Now listen to me'—her words were brave, but her heart was beating. 'Listen to me'—she took courage by the aspect and appearance of the man, who watched her like a cowed and frightened cur—'you are to go away from here—quite away to another part of London. I don't care where you go. You are never to see your wife again, or attempt to see her, or write to her, or let her know in any way that you are alive. Oh ! we have thanked God so often that you are dead that we cannot afford to have you coming to life again. You are a dead man, do you hear ? First of all,' she repeated, 'you are never to see or to communicate with your wife. Never—never.'

'I hear. What the devil's coming next, I wonder ?'

Meantime he had observed—he had not forgotten his old trick of observation—two or three things which struck him with wonder and made him reflect. The girl had white delicate hands ; her fingers were not marked or pricked with any kind of work ; her dress which was simple was well made, and she wore dainty well-made boots. It is only a lady who wears good boots, he thought, because he had in his old days made careful studies

of the sex for professional purposes. But how in the world could his daughter be a lady?

'The next thing is that you are not to try to communicate with any of your children, or find out where they live. Do you hear? You shall not make their lives shameful for them by your loathsome and horrible presence.'

'Suppose I won't promise? Why should I?'

'In that case you shall get no help. I promise you so much—not the least help from any of us. We shall keep you from your wife by main force if necessary. You may starve in the ditch and we will not help you.'

I have often wondered how Valentine would have received this man had she not known the whole truth concerning Polly—which-is-Marla. One or two things are quite certain. She would not have used language of such excellent plainness; nor would she have boxed his ears; nor would she have been so unhesitating in her manner and her action.

'I only want honest work,' he said with a whine. 'Give me honest work and I will trouble no one. You shan't know you've got a father. I forgive you for your hard words—for your blows. Let us—oh! let us walk in love.'

'I do not believe that you want work at all,' said Valentine; 'you did not work before you went to prison, and I do not believe that you want to begin now. You want drink and tobacco, and nothing to do. Well; I will give you what you want—on conditions. What money have you?'

He sadly replied that he had nothing; not a copper, which of course was a lie. He went on to explain, forgetting that he had already said he was just out of prison, that he had spent such money as was due to him in the fruitless search after work.

'I am weary and footsore,' he said, with a sigh. 'Weariness I complain not of, and footsoreness is my righteous punishment.'

'Lift up your foot.' The man obeyed. Twenty years of prison make a man ready to obey anybody. 'It is false; your boots are quite new; you have not walked about at all.'

'And yet she is my daughter—my own little Marla! That I thought would have sat upon my poor knees and comforted my broken heart. And she's got a hard heart—oh! what a hard heart! I'd rather have my footsoreness than such a hard heart.'

'I do not want any promises or assurances from you at all,' Valentine went on, 'and I want no more hypocrisies. I will give you—I will give you'—she considered how little she might offer

—‘a sovereign a week so long as you keep away. The moment you seek to find out any of your children or terrify your wife the allowance ceases. Do you hear and understand?’

‘Yes, I hear. What’s a sovereign? It isn’t worth making a promise about. I can spend a sovereign a day and think nothing of it.’

‘Then earn a sovereign a day.’

‘If you can get a sovereign a week to give away, you can get two. I shan’t ask how you get it, my dear. Lord! everybody knows that a lady’s-maid—you look like a lady’s-maid—generally gets opportunities.’ He looked so desperately cunning that Valentine longed to box his ears again. When a woman begins boxing of ears there’s no saying where she may leave off—witness the case of certain Czarinas and other ladies who have had command of the knout and the flagellum and the stake. ‘Spring it to two sovereigns for your poor old father, Marla, my child.’

‘I will give you one and no more—but only on my own conditions. Here is the first week’s money.’ She opened her purse and took out the golden coin. His eyes greedily grasped the fact that there were many more lying in the purse. ‘It is the last if you break my conditions. If you do not, I will send another next week to the address you may name.’

She gave him a leaf from a pocket-book, and he wrote on it an address to some street in the East-End.

‘You can write to me to the almshouse; to the care of my mother. But don’t sign your letter; and don’t dare to address me—me—as your child.’

‘Who are you, then?’ he asked, looking at her with admiration and surprise. ‘Who are you, if you are not my child? A daughter of Hester Monument should be standing over a wash-tub. What are you?’

‘That I shall not tell you. Remember that there is not one of your children—not one of them who knows the truth—who will not receive you with shame and horror unutterable. There is not one who will give you a helping hand except myself. You have your choice. Take my twenty shillings a week and go away and get drunk among the rogues and villains—your friends. If you refuse my conditions, or offer to molest any of us, you shall see how much you will get from all of us together. Go!’

There were two or three things in this speech which filled Mr. Carey with pain—especially to be told that his children regarded him with shame. Every man who becomes, whether by his own

consent or not, a hermit for twenty years, builds up during his isolation an *effigie* of himself. Mr. Carey knew that he had retired amidst a blaze of popularity; the papers were full of him and his exploits; portraits were sold of him in the *Illustrated Police News* and elsewhere; he knew that he stood first in the profession, which is a proud thing for anybody in any profession to say. He was the Premier Burglar. He was the gallant hero who pitted his own ingenuity and resources against all the intellect and the strength and the organisation that the richest country in the world can command. To be caught and clapped in prison was a defeat, to be sure, but there was all that glory—'loathing and horror'—the girl called it. This, then, was their mother's influence—their mother's; the influence of one who could never rise to the level of his Greatness.

And she said he had consorted with rogues and villains. Rogues and villains—rebels when successful become revolutionists—would willingly have consorted with him, but he would have none of their companionship. He lived apart from the vulgar criminal; he consorted not with the common burglar. He worked alone, and he lived apart from his fellow-professionals.

I do not suppose that Mr. Carey expected to be received with open arms. But he did expect some show of respect—at least that respect due to his position in the walk of life he adorned. And to be received with these words of disgust and insult by his youngest daughter—it was hard to bear. Had it been her mother he would have felt it less, because she was a woman of slow imagination and contracted views, and could never understand his glory.

'Go,' said his unnatural daughter.

He obeyed, and started on his way without a word.

'No,' she said, 'not back by that road. You will pass the almshouse, and she may hear your footstep again. Go down this road.'

'I do not know where it leads to.'

'I don't care. Go this way.'

He obeyed, and walked slowly away, turning from time to time like an unwilling cur. Each time he turned his head he saw the girl standing in the road watching him.

When he was out of sight, Valentine returned slowly to the almshouses.

'That was a terrible dream, Polly, wasn't it?'

'A dreadful dream, mother. But I don't think it will come again. I will stay here to-night just to prevent your having it,

you know. It won't come if you think some one is with you.'

'Polly, my dear, it is just wonderful the difference since you came back. And, oh! the comfort of having some one that I can tell all my troubles to!'

CHAPTER XVIII.

LE PÈRE PRODIGUE.

THE ticket-of-leave man went away obediently; and, once arrived in the main road, he began to think—that is to say, to devise wickedness. This girl, who said she was his daughter, if he could only, in some way or other, get her under his thumb. She was a most beautiful girl; she was possessed of manners which would make anybody think her a lady; she wasn't afraid—Heavens! what could he not do if he had such a girl to work for him? There was once a professional in his own line, a cracker of cribs—he had read this story somewhere in the old days when he used to read so many books—who had in his power, and at his orders, such a girl, whether his daughter or his mistress he knew not. She went into the finest society and kept her eyes about her, and put this fortunate Professor on to what she observed, and helped him to get into houses, unlocking doors for him, slipping the bolts at night, pulling up shutters, and opening windows for him. And all the time pretending she was a lady. Mr. Carey remembered this beautiful story, and dreamed of the wonderful time he might have if Marla would only be such a daughter to him. And he dreamed as well of the great and glorious reputation he might make for himself; much greater and much nobler even than his first glory, which was now, he already perceived with sorrow, well-nigh forgotten. In fact, the burglar, like the singer and the actor, is liable to a swift oblivion. His works do not, like those of the poet and the sculptor, live after him, and there is little to keep his memory green, except a few pages, perhaps, in the Newgate Calendar.

From daughter to son is a natural step. Mr. Carey began to think of his son as well—there was another daughter; but he had heard nothing about her, and three sons, all men now; one of them, he knew, was a workman of some kind; as for the other two, what were they? She dared to make conditions about her

measly sovereign, did she? He was not to show himself to any of his children. Why—hang her conditions! He would do as he pleased. He would go and see his children if he pleased. The working-man, he reflected, would certainly be married, and as certainly would have no money, except perhaps the price of a pint, which is neither here nor there. Besides, he had not yet found out where this son lived, nor where the second lived. There remained the third, his youngest son, Claude, who lived in the Temple. He only knew about the Temple that it is a place much frequented by lawyers, a tribe whom he naturally disliked, and ranked in the same class with policemen, detectives, and judges. His son was employed there in some capacity; a clerk, no doubt. Every profession, of course, preferred to their father's! He took the stolen envelope out of his pocket. 'Claude Monument, Esquire, 25 King's Bench Walk, Temple.'

'It's a chance,' he said. 'Perhaps the boy has got some money. I'll risk it.'

He had been drinking since he left his daughter, and the brandy and water, perhaps, gave him the courage to break the conditions and so endanger the weekly sovereign. However, he did break those conditions, and yet he did not lose his allowance, as you shall hear.

About ten o'clock that evening Claude was sitting alone in his chambers. He was neither reading nor writing, but the lamp was beside him, and a book was on his knees, and he was looking into the fire, for the evening of early autumn was chilly. Outside, the Temple was very quiet. There are only a few now who continue to live there, and these were out of town; I think that in all these courts Claude was the only living person except the policeman. And there was a silence almost as absolute as that which fell upon the place after the Suppression of the Great Order and the burning of the Grand Master and his Knights.

He was thinking about the strange work in which he was engaged; and upon Valentine, who thought she was his sister, but was not, and of her glowing cheeks and kindling eyes, and the voice which moved him like the notes of some great organ playing mighty music. He was thinking, too, that it would not lead to peace of mind if he should continue to think of those eyes and that voice.

In the midst of this silence—he heard no warning footstep on the stairs—there was a single knock at his door.

He wondered who could be his visitor so late and so unexpected.

It was a stranger; an elderly man, thin and spare, with grey hair, who stood at his door.

'I beg your pardon humbly, sir,' he said, taking off his hat; 'I am come in hopes of seeing a boy, sir, a boy named Claude Monument, who works on this staircase. Perhaps he is in the housekeeper's room on the basement.'

'Can't you read? There is the name on the door.'

The man read and looked surprised.

'I am Claude Monument. What do you want with me?'

'You Claude Monument? You?'

It was rather dark in the passage where Claude stood, but the gas-lamp on the staircase showed Mr. Carey that his son was not quite what he had expected.

'Is your master out of the way, young man?' he whispered.

'What do you mean?'

'Your master. Is he out of the way?'

'My master?'

'Can you take me where we can have a quiet talk together—you and me—without his asking questions? It's for you and me together, you know.'

'Who are you?'

'I've something important to tell you—something joyful. But, I say, you can't be Claude Monument? Why, you're dressed like a gentleman.'

'Who are you?'

'Well, that is just what I have come to tell you.'

Claude hesitated. 'These are my own chambers,' he said.

'Good Lord! Your own chambers!' The man was amazed. 'Your own chambers! Your own! How the Devil—and the gal looked like a lady. Quite time I called and inquired. Look here, young man, if you live here, and if you are alone, take me inside. I've got something to say; something—ah!—something you'll be pleased to hear. But we ought to be quite alone. It is a family secret, young man—a family secret, and it mustn't be talked out loud.'

'Come in, then.' Claude admitted the man and shut the door, not without some presentiment of coming evil. A presentiment never does any good, being in this respect like the cold wind before the rain; it comes too late for a warning, and no sooner is it felt than the Evil thing is upon one. Yet it is a comfort somehow to feel afterwards that one had a presentiment. Men

bitten by rattlesnakes have often been consoled in their last moments by this thought.

'Now,' said Claude, leading his visitor into the room, and shutting the outer oak, 'who are you, and what do you want? I don't remember to have seen you before.'

There was only a reading-lamp on the table, but the lamp was covered by a shade, so that the room was comparatively dark. The man had taken off his hat, and was now holding it awkwardly in both hands as if he wasn't used to a hat of that kind; indeed he had worn one of quite a different shape for twenty years. Claude saw that he was grey-headed and smooth-cheeked, and that he was a man of slight build.

'Now then,' he said, 'go on with your important news.'

The man cleared his throat.

'Are you really and truly, young man,' he asked, 'Claude Monument?'

'That is my name.' Claude owed no man ought, so that the man could not possibly have come for money. Perhaps he was a beggar of the more complicated kind, a book hawker, or one who touts for subscriptions. But beggars of this kind ply their trade by day. He felt uncomfortable.

'You are the son of Mrs. Monument who used to live beside Hackney Marsh, and—if one may speak of it to a swell like yourself—took in washing, being a poor but honest woman.'

'My mother was a washerwoman,' said Claude.

'Well,' the man went on, 'I don't understand it. You look like a gentleman, and the other'—here he checked himself—'And you live among the lawyers.'

'I live among the lawyers.'

'I've seen 'em in court—many times, takin' their characters away from unfortunate men. I've seen 'em, and heard 'em.' He added a short but impressive prayer relating to their final doom. 'And you live here! Lord! his eyes swell out with fatness, and look at me without a mag.'

'Who are you, then?'

Claude snatched the shade from the lamp. The man was decently dressed; he did not look like a beggar; yet he was certainly trying to get something out of him. As for the man's knowing something of his family history, everybody knew that. Wherever he went, on his first introduction, or on the first mention of his name, there followed the whisper, that he had often actually heard, and more often saw on the lips of those who

uttered it. Your own experience of the world, dear reader, will supply the words.

The man did not reply. He was looking about the room, which had a certain appearance of wealth—that is to say, there were easy-chairs, pictures, half a dozen silver cups won at scratch fours and other sports; and there were a few ‘things,’ as collectors say; there were books—heaps of books—and curtains, and carpets, and all the things which go to make a young man’s chambers look handsome and well appointed. On the mantelshef were two large photographs of two girls. The man recognised one of them. ‘That’s Marla,’ he murmured; ‘the other, I suppose, is Melenda.’ Then he turned sharply to Claude.

‘Are all these things your own?’

‘Certainly.’

‘And you leave your mother in an almshouse. And the other one’—he checked himself again, though the situation was absolutely incomprehensible.

Claude reddened, but he kept his temper.

‘What has that to do with you?’ he said. ‘Get to your business.’

‘Young man, you leave your mother there—blind, too—among paupers, without a sixpence to bestow upon any deserving relations and friends who might happen to call—’

‘Get on with your business.’

‘If such is your treatment of your mother, how would you treat your unfortunate father?’

Claude laughed.

‘For Heaven’s sake, man, tell me what you want, or I shall turn you out of the place.’

‘If your unfortunate father was to come to you, not having seen you for twenty years—if he was standing before you poor and destitute, as I might be now, but happy in his mind through repentance; all his old pals scattered, and nothing left him in the world but his hopes of heaven and his good resolutions for the path of righteousness, which wraps a poor man as with a garment, and keeps off of him the cold wind of poverty; and with his clear conscience and his term worked out and his ticket in his pocket, afraid of no man, whether policeman or magistrate—would you treat that father with scorn, and send him, like you sent your mother, to an almshouse for the remainder of his days?’

‘Can you do nothing but ask questions? Now, man, come to the point or leave the place. As for my father, you may keep

his name out of it, because he has been dead for twenty years.'

'Suppose he wasn't dead,' he whispered hoarsely, looking Claude full in the face, but only for a moment, for his shifty eyes dropped again. 'Suppose your father wasn't dead, after all.'

'I cannot suppose anything of the kind.'

'Who told you he was dead?'

'I don't know. I have always been told he was dead.'

'Did they never tell you where and how he died?'

'No; I never asked.'

'And did they tell you what was his trade?'

'My father was a locksmith, and clever at his trade.'

'He was. Correct, young man. There wasn't a finer locksmith in all London either for making a lock or for picking one—or for picking one, mind—which made his fortune and his name. There wasn't a cleverer man at his trade in all England—ay, you may throw in the United States as well, though he never practised in the States. He was the envy and the pride of all such as followed the same trade. A locksmith! And so that's all you know about it. Lord! To think that children *could* be so bad brought up. So you think your father was a low mechanic, do you? That's what they told you. And that he's dead. That's what they told you. Well, it's like them. It's all part of the same treatment. Made you ashamed of your own father; called him a mechanic, did they?'

'This is very strange.' Claude by this time felt a profound uneasiness in the presence of this man, who looked at him so curiously and asked so many questions and gave no answer to any. 'Can't you tell me who you are, and what you want?'

'Directly—I will directly. So he was a locksmith, and clever at his trade, and he died somewhere. Nobody knows where; none of his children ask after him; no one cares about him; they have even dropped his name and taken their mother's.'

'What! Dropped his name?'

'Young gentleman,' he went on slowly, 'I've got a most important communication to make. Give me something to make it on.'

'Here are paper and pens.'

'I want drink, man. Good Lord! I've been off of it for twenty years, and I've only just begun again. Give me something, I say, to make it on.'

Claude gave him some whisky. He drank half a glass of the spirit neat, and then a tumblerful mixed in equal proportions.

'That's what I call something to make communications on. Now then, I'll sit down, I think.'

He sat down. 'A most comfortable chair too. You swells know how to make yourselves comfortable, don't you? And to think that you're a swell, and your mother in an almshouse! and your father out on his ticket of leave!'

'What!' Claude started. 'Say that again, man. What do you mean by that?'

'A dozen times I'll say it, young man. Your father, I said, out on his ticket of leave, I said. Out—on—his—Ticket—Ticket, you know—Ticket—of Leave. Leave, you know. For the unexpired part of his term. That's what I mean.'

Claude did not call him a liar; he only gazed stupidly at him.

'I will say it a hundred times more if you like,' continued the stranger. 'Your father——'

'No! don't say it again. Don't—don't dare to say it again.'

'Why, you are not ashamed of it, are you, mate? You can't be ashamed of it. A Ticket of Leave is a very honourable thing to have. Only well-conducted convicts, and them as can stand fast in the Faith and can be trusted, and are favourably reported on by the good chaplain, ever get a ticket of leave. My good chaplain thought very high of me when I came away. Continue in Prayer, sez 'ee, and watch in the same, he sez.'

'Your chaplain? Yours? Are you a convict, too?'

'Look here, young feller, don't speak as if convicts was dirt beneath your feet. Very likely you'll be one yourself before long. Most chaps are sooner or later. Convict! Yes, and why not? I've served my eighteen months, and my two years, and my five years, and my five-and-twenty, and by this time I ought to know. Convict? Why, there's many and many a better fellow in than out, let me tell you. As for yourself, with your swell clothes and your pictures and all, I should think you must be in before long. It's a neater turn-out than ever I could show, though I was looked up to as the head of the Profession, and there wasn't a man in it but would have worked under me and proud. But I worked alone. No one knew where I was, nor where I was going next. Yet I never got so far as to rooms in the Temple among the lawyers theirselves. What's *your* lay, mate? Is it genteel fakin? Is it sport? Is it races, or cards, or what—that keeps such chambers as these?'

Claude felt dizzy and sick. He could not reply.

'You may tell me, my boy, because you see'—again he lowered his voice and dropped his eyes—'you see, Claude, it's a

long time since you saw me, and o' course you can't be expected to remember me. But I am your father. Nothin' else than that, my son.'

'You? My father? You?'

The man crossed his legs in his chair and grinned. He had told his secret, and he was bolder.

'Yes, Claude, I'm your father. I couldn't get out to see you very well, and none of you ever come to see me. Of course, if you'd known I was alive you'd have come regular and as often as they let you. Give us your hand, my boy. You're a well set-up lad, and I'm proud of you.'

'My father? You?'

Claude repeated; but he did not take that proffered hand.

The ticket-of-leave man swore a great oath as loudly as if he had been a Norman King. Then he assured Claude again, and with much greater emphasis, that he really was his parent.

'Look here, boy,' he went on, 'you ought to be proud of your father. But they've never told you about me. Now I've got a surprise for you—a joyful surprise. Your mother, you see, never took any honest pride in my profession, and ran away from me, she did, when she found out what I was. Ran away and took her maiden name again, and told all her children they were Monuments. It wasn't hard to find where she'd gone to, which I did first thing when I came out. Bless you, it was the most convenient thing in the world for me, that little cottage by the Marsh! If ever I was wanted, and when it was convenient to lay by for a bit till people got unsuspecting again, I could go and lay by there. The neighbours, they thought I was in the seafaring line, which accounted for my coming and going as I pleased, and many's the hiding-place I've made in that cottage unknown to that honest woman. She was too proud to take any of my money—well, I had all the more to spend, and I had no pals to stand in with, and so I lived like a fighting cock, travelled first-class like a gentleman, and stayed at the best hotels and drank champagne like the out-and-out swell I was. But I never got to lodgings like this. I wish now I'd thought of that.'

Claude stared at him, and listened without saying a word.

'Well, at last, there I was—five-and-twenty years. So she told you all I was dead; and she never told you who her husband was, nor where he was. My son, I am no other than the great Jem Carey, of whom you've heard o' course.'

Claude's face showed no emotion at all on hearing this intelligence.

‘Jem Carey. Why, man, you can’t pretend you never heard of Jem Carey. The King of the Burglars they called him ; Prince of Housebreakers, some of ’em said. His name was in all the papers, and the country rang with his noble name. Jem Carey—why, you must have heard talk of Jem Carey.’

‘Unfortunately,’ said Claude, ‘I have never heard of him before.’

‘Oh ! Lord !’ said Mr. Carey, properly disgusted. ‘And you the boy that I destined for the profession from the beginning. I said to myself I must have a successor. One of my boys shall be brought up to his father’s business. And I had you christened Claude Duval a purpose, after the most dashing highwayman in history.’

Claude for the first time in his life actually wished that he could exchange his Christian name for another—Samuel, for instance, or Leviticus, or anything.

Mr. Carey contemplated his son with a doubtful eye. There was no kindling of joy or of glory in Claude’s aspect, but on the contrary a steady look of pain and dismay.

‘Won’t you shake hands then ?’ He held out a forgiving and paternal hand.

‘No,’ said Claude, ‘I will not shake hands.’

‘Very well.’ The man put on his hat. ‘I will go away now. I shall come again when you have got your swell friends round you. I will introduce myself to them as a Ticket of Leave man and your father.’

‘You will do as you please.’

Mr. Carey hesitated. ‘Will you give me something to help me on my way ?’

‘Nothing. Be good enough to go.’

‘Your father is starving.’

‘That is not true. You are just out of prison. You must have some money. Go.’

‘I come back after twenty years of Quod, and I find my boy a swell, and this is how he treats his repentant father.’ He looked as if he was trying to cry.

‘You can go. I have nothing for you. Take yourself and your history and your prison cant’—he shuddered with shame—‘out of my chambers. You have my address. You can send me yours. Whatever we do for you—if we do anything, remember—will be done on the condition that you keep yourself out of the way of everybody.’

'I'm going. I am sorry I came to such an unnatural son. But I have other children. Yes, they will be kinder to their father. They will be Samaritans, if it's only twopence.'

Claude made no reply.

'There's my boy Joe, my eldest. No doubt he's a married man now, and his wife and children will be pleased to see the poor old man, and to take him in. And there is Sam. I can very easily find out Sam if I like. I think Sam will be glad indeed to see me. And then there's my wife in the almshouse. Poor old woman! she hasn't got any money, but she'll share her crust. And—then there's the two girls. Very likely those are their pretty likenesses.' He pointed to the two photographs. 'The girls look the right sort, don't they? Which of them two, now, is Marla, and which is Melenda?'

Claude took the photographs and laid them on their faces. It was intolerable that this man should so much as look at them.

'Stay,' he cried. 'You shall not even try to make yourself known to—to my sisters. Do you hear? Do you hear?'

He would have seized the man by the collar, but a certain filial piety—a filial repugnance—prevented him. It is impossible for any one to shake his own father by the collar, however badly he may turn out. Valentine, it is true, had boxed Mr. Carey's ears, but then she had her secret, and knew that he was not her father; and besides, he had offered to kiss her.

'Good Heavens!' Claude cried, looking at the man with a kind of despair. 'They said you were dead. We thought you dead. We believed—we were told—that you were an honest man. You ought to have been dead long ago.'

'Ought I?' The man grinned. 'That's a question of opinion. Why, I mean to live for thirty years more. Prison is a very healthy place, my dear boy, whatever you may think, though they do cut the diet close. I feel as young and as fit as if I was twenty-five instead of sixty. I mean to live to ninety, and I shall very likely come here a great deal. Thirty years more I intend to live. We shall see each other very often, my son. Oh! very often indeed, Claude, my boy.'

Claude made an effort and refrained, even from bad words. 'You heard what I said about—your daughters.'

'Explain yourself more clearly, my son. I am afraid you presumed to give orders to your father. Whereas you will read in the Epistles, Children, obey your parents in all things.'

'I said that you must not attempt to find out your daughters.'

'Why not, my son?'

'Because your very existence is a shame and a disgrace to us; and because they are happy in believing you to be dead.'

'Is that all?'

'No. Because they have never been told, poor things, that their father is a convict.'

Mr. Carey put his hands in his pocket and whistled.

'Look ye, my lad,' he said; 'suppose I want my girls. Consider a father's feelings. However, I am a peaceful man; I am always open to reason. What will you give me?'

Claude hesitated. It was clear that this man would have to be bought off. But at what price?

'I don't know,' he replied; 'I must consult my brother.'

'Is he a swell, too? Hang me, if I understand it.'

'No; he's a locksmith by trade.'

'Then I shan't wait for Joe's opinions. I'm one of them who stick to their rich friends. I stay where the money is. Now, there's money here. If you and me don't come to an understanding——' Here he interposed a long parenthesis full of all the words he had not been allowed to use in prison. It treated of his son's behaviour to him and the revolting nature of that unfilial loathing which Claude exhibited towards him. This, he said, he must and should revenge, unless an understanding was come to. 'Then I go straight to the almshouse—I know where it is, and I'll frighten the old woman into fits; and to-morrow I'll find out Melenda and Marla, and introduce myself to their fine friends.'

Ten minutes later Mr. Carey walked down the stairs. He was richer by thirty shillings than when he mounted those steps. He had also the assurance that this sum would be continued to him as a weekly allowance so long as he observed two or three simple rules. These were, in point of fact, the same as had already been made by Valentine. He was not to make his existence known, or to force himself upon his wife or any of his children, especially either of his daughters. Should he break these conditions, Claude assured him, in the most solemn manner, he should never receive another farthing from himself or from any of his brothers and sisters.

The parent replied that his sole desire was to live virtuously and to retrieve the past in the eyes of the world; gentlemen who are penitents of this description always assume that the world is following their career with the greatest interest, and yet they con-

tinue in a retiring modesty about their own antecedents. He also said that he should strive to find some quiet corner in London where there were none of his old associates, and only pious men. Here he should perhaps be enabled, by his son's assistance, to open a small shop in the good book line. He had thought of conducting an open-air service on Sundays for penitents like himself. As for telling any of his family that he was alive, or being wishful to force his company upon them, nothing could be farther from his thoughts. Claude might trust him. It was not a great thing for a father to ask the confidence of his son. Thirty shillings was little enough for the mere necessities of life. But he would make it do. He deserved no more. Fortunately he never drank; that habit he had given up; he illustrated the remark by taking another glass of whisky and water. He had read a great deal of the Bible while in his cell. Among the things he remembered were the gracious words of Paul, *Corinthians*——'

'That is enough,' said Claude. 'Here is your first week's money. I shall send your next to this address. No; don't dare to come here for it. I do not want ever to see your face again.'

'They'll never tell each other,' Mr. Carey murmured, going softly down the stairs. 'They'll be ashamed to tell each other. And they're good, between them, for two pound ten a week. This is a good day's work—a very good day's work.'

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE CHURCHYARD.

WHEN the man left him, Claude remained standing, and mechanically listened for his footsteps on the stairs; they were as light as the steps of a girl and as noiseless; but he heard them on the gravel in the court below. Then they ceased, and he lifted his head and breathed a sigh of relief. He was alone. Something to get rid of such a presence, though one knows full well that it will come again. Over his mantel-shelf there was a cabinet adorned, among other things, with a small square of looking-glass. In this Claude caught, as he turned his head, a glimpse of his own face. He shuddered and crimsoned with shame—for he recognised, unmistakably, the features of the

man who had just left him. Only for a moment, then the resemblance disappeared ; but he had seen it ; he was the son of that man.

He took up the photographs of the two girls which he had laid upon their faces while the man was with him. The same resemblance flashed across Violet's face in the same strange and sudden manner, disappearing instantly. It was like the evidence of an unwilling witness. 'Behold !' said the picture, 'I am none other than that man's daughter.'

He was, then, the son of a convicted felon, a burglar, a ticket-of-leave man, an habitual criminal ; not, as he had formerly thought, and often proudly stated, *fabri filius*, the son of a Smith ; not the son of an honest man whose memory he cherished with filial pride and admiration ; but the son of a man who had spent most of his life in prison ; he had been all his life going about under false pretences ; his very name was false ; it was Carey, not Monument at all ; James Carey, his father, was a most notorious and celebrated evil liver, and his own very Christian name was chosen for him in honour of an illustrious thief. His father was a burglar and a convict—the one goes very naturally and fitly with the other. If a man's birth were a mystery, and if he were tempted to pry into the secret in the hope of turning out a Baron or an Earl, and were then to find out that his father was not a nobleman at all, but only a Rogue, there would be little pity for that man. Because, given an unknown father, and remembering that there are more Rogues than Barons in the world, the chances are in favour of the less desirable connection. But when a man has all his life rejoiced in the honour of his father, and been as proud of him, though he was but a locksmith, as if he had been a Baronet, and now has without any fault of his own such a father sprung upon him suddenly, that man is very greatly to be pitied. He needs all the pity and all the sympathy that the world has to offer. It is one thing indeed to have it whispered that you are self-made, son of a working man ; and another thing to hear it whispered, each whisper ringing in your ears like the blast of Fame's Trumpet echoed from pole to pole, that you are a son of a—*Convict*.

Claude heard that whisper already. The room was full of the echoes of that whisper. They rang from wall to wall, from floor to ceiling. 'Son of a Convict—son of a Thief—son of a Rogue !'

'I will emigrate,' he said, 'I will take another name—I will go to some far-off colony where no one will know who I am.'

A foolish resolve. Because there is no colony, near or far off,

which will receive any man without knowing all about him ; who was his father ; what he has done ; why he has left his native country. He may keep these things secret if he pleases. Probably they will be found out for him. In either case, he will enter no better society than can be found at a Bar or in a Saloon. He will be a *déclassé*.

London is the only possible place for such concealment. He who travels, as the poet tells us, may change his sky but not his mind. He may also change his name, but never his history—that is unchangeable and indestructible—and that, whatever it may be, good or bad, these honest colonials insist upon knowing before they admit him to their society.

Claude, ignorant of this fact, remembered immediately that he could not emigrate, because it was impossible for him to leave his people. He thought of the misery which might come to them ; to his mother ; to his brother Joe ; to Sam, proud, like himself, of his honest father ; to Melenda—to Valentine first, and to Violet next. He remembered their defenceless condition. Could he be so cowardly as to leave them ? Could he go away and leave them to the tender mercies of this—creature ? One must not under any circumstances speak evil of one's father ; one should not, if possible, even think evil of him. Therefore it is providential that there exist certain neutral words which carry reproach by the manner of expression rather than by any accusation conveyed in themselves. Thus—'this'—gasp—'CREATURE,' 'this'—gasp—'MAN,' 'this'—gasp—'WOMAN.' Moses said, when he broke the tables of stone, 'this'—gasp—'PEOPLE.' We can use such words—gasp and all—without breaking any commandments—blamelessly, and for the relief and solace of the soul.

He stood in his silent room for an hour at least, trying to look the thing in the face, and failing altogether. Then a thought—a feeble thought at best—struck him. Joe it was who said his father was dead. What if the man was an impostor ? Why did Joe say he was dead ? What reason could there be for Joe making up a story ? He forgot for the moment the evidence of the looking-glass and the photographs, catching, as men in trouble do, at a straw. He would go at once and consult Joe. His mind was so troubled with the burden of this horrible discovery that he actually forgot that it was already midnight. He seized his hat and sallied forth with intent to get to Tottenham.

He walked down Fleet Street where there were plenty of

people about, especially late journalists; up Ludgate Hill which was still awake; and along Cheapside, where the stream of life was still running, but in a narrow thread. At the Bank there were the last omnibuses with a great shouting and a crowd. But Cornhill was quiet. Whether the streets were noisy or quiet, crowded or empty, made no difference to Claude, who strode on, wrapped in his gloomy thoughts. Then he turned into Bishopsgate Street and began the long straight walk which leads past Shoreditch and along the Kingsland Road and the Stoke Newington Road to Tottenham. The road was nearly deserted now, and long before he reached Tottenham the last belated resident was safe in bed. Nobody awake, he thought, except the policeman and the burg—perhaps he remembered, with a natural shudder, his own father, getting his hand in again, after many years' total abstinence from the jemmy.

As he walked along the silent road there followed him two Voices, speaking in his ear at either side. They kept on repeating the same words, and those very disagreeable words, such as, 'Your father is a convict and a thief . . . Honour thy father that thy days may be long in the land . . . He has spent most of his days in prison . . . The Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge . . . He is a most notorious and even historical Rogue . . . unto the third and fourth generation . . . The most wicked man, probably, that at present lives . . . that which is crooked cannot be made straight . . . a lawless and impenitent villain . . . his seed shall be destroyed among the children of men . . .' And so on—one at each side. To stifle these voices he began to think of a certain work on the *Mystery of Pain*, written by a learned physician who persuaded himself that he understood all about it. With *Pain* may be considered *Shame* and all kinds of *Evil*. Everybody, said the learned Physician, should bear it cheerfully if anybody else is relieved or helped by it. But who was benefited by the fact that Claude's father was a *Rogue*? And who, to put a plainer case, can help another man by having a toothache? This doctrine Claude perceived would not help his own case. And then he suffered the Voices to go on again.

When he arrived at Tottenham and stood at the door of Joe's house, with its closed shutters and drawn blinds, he realised for the first time that it was the very dead of night, in fact, at two o'clock in the morning, when sleep is at its soundest. He might knock up his brother, but what excuse could be made to wife and

children for this unusual disturbance? Or he might go straight home again, which would be absurd after coming all that way. Or he might walk about until morning, which was not far off; or he might find a place where he might sit down and gnash his teeth.

Not many years ago Tottenham was a small country town full of pleasant lanes, spacious houses, leafy orchards and splendid gardens, with memories of Isaac Walton, and the High Crown and the famous harbour—'the contexture of woodbines, sweet-briar, jessamine, and myrtle'—and the Seven Sisters, and many goodly mansions inhabited by great London merchants, and of Quakers fiery for the faith and abounding in good works. The Quakers have mostly gone; the big houses are mostly pulled down; rows of streets lie to right and left, ugly with grey brick and mean design and monotonous uniformity. Claude strolled about these new streets, slowly and wearily. His first excitement was wearing off; besides, he was feeling tired. Presently he took by accident a road which led him past the new houses and into the region of old Tottenham—such of it as still exists. He was in a lane with walls on both sides—they were old red-brick walls with stonecrop and wallflowers on top, but these details escaped him in the darkness; beyond the walls were trees, and beyond the trees were gardens, and the night air was heavy with the scent of a thousand flowers—the flowers of early autumn when the mignonette is still sweet, and the honeysuckle and jessamine still blossoming. The lane led him, he perceived, to the Church, which stood, a dark mass with a black tower, outlined against the sky among the white tombstones.

He opened the gate and stepped within the churchyard.

Tottenham church has a very good churchyard, full of interesting monuments of unknown people, and in the daytime you might wander there for a long time and learn quantities of history just hinted at in the bald disjointed way common to tombstones. You might, I say, under happier conditions, but you cannot, because they have stuck up rows of spiky iron railings beside the path, so that no moralist, unless he have very long legs, shall ever be permitted to get any good out of the churchyard at all. It is an abominable, unchristian custom. What should we say if the Catacombs of Rome, or the Cemetery of Arles, were to be closed for ever, and so the messages and lessons of the dead to the living were to be read no longer? What if they were to hang curtains before all the tablets in

Westminster, and rub out the inscription of Eshmunazar? This, however, if you come to think of it, is exactly what the bright Intelligences of Tottenham have done for their folk. At Waltham Abbey, too, this same thing has been done, and at St. Giles's in the City, and I dare say in hundreds of churchyards. There are, again, two splendid yew trees in the churchyard which ought to be surrounded by benches for the old folk to sit upon in summer evenings; but they are now within the spikes and there is no bench round either of them, and so another opportunity is lost until, in good time, there may haply come a Vicar with a touch of poetry and sentiment, and a feeling for the dead; and then the spikes will be taken away, and the benches will be put up, and the tombstones will resume their solemn lessons to the living.

Claude was more desirous of resting than of reading the monuments; it was too dark to read, and, besides, he was not in a moralising, but rather of an accusing and rebellious mood. He stepped over the spikes, however, being tall enough and long enough of limb, and finding a flat stone, sat down upon it and tried to think connectedly, which he had not as yet been able to do. It is something in every case of trouble, just to put the facts plainly. Three or four hours ago, he explained to himself, as if there was somebody inside him who was very stupid, he had suddenly come into possession of the most undesirable thing in the whole world, a thing absolutely impossible to get rid of, or to forget, or ever to put away and hide—namely, a disgraceful and shameful father. Try to think, you of the majority, whose fathers have lived blameless lives and left an honourable record behind them—put it to yourselves—what it would have been to you, had they, like Claude's father—you will find a difficulty in finishing the sentence.

When your doctor discovers that you have got a disease which he will never be able to cure, which you will have to carry with you to the grave, a burden which will never fall off your shoulders, you presently, when the shock is over, fall to inquiring after the various methods employed by the faculty for alleviating the horrid thing, just as the man who has to carry a knapsack is always trying to adjust the confounded straps into the most comfortable position possible. Claude began already to adjust his straps. It was a horribly heavy burden which was laid upon his shoulders. It was a burden with which he could no longer venture among his friends; it would render impossible for him the only life which he thought worth having—the life of culture among men and

women of culture. It could not be hidden away or disguised; it was like a humpback. How could such a burden be alleviated? There seemed but one way. It was the way already adopted by Valentine. His father must be bribed into effacing himself. No one must be permitted to know of his existence or to see him except Claude himself. He must bear the burden alone; he must keep the secret to himself. Perhaps when his father—he kept on saying ‘my father’ to himself, in order to bring the Thing home more completely—when his father quite understood that his only chance of getting money was to keep quiet and out of the way, he would do so. If he disobeyed, why then—Claude ground his teeth—then he might do his worst; and then—poor Violet!—poor Valentine! He sprang to his feet in an agony of wrath and shame, for in such a case he could do nothing for them, nothing at all, but sit down with them in sackcloth and ashes, and remember that this was only the first generation and that there were yet two or even three to follow, with the sins of their grandfather to drag them down as they strove to climb upwards.

The annals of our ancestors are for the most part forgotten, so that it is only in great families, whose history is preserved and handed down to posterity, that the tragedies, the disgraces, and the shames are remembered. To do the great families justice, they seem rather to rejoice in the desperate villanies of their ancestors. But the evil deeds of the rude forefathers are for the most part vanished into oblivion, no longer remembered, no more talked about by the second and the third generation, though they may, in their poverty and obscurity, be suffering for those sins. Who remembereth that the great-uncle of the family baker—himself a very worthy man—was hanged? Who careth that the respectable family solicitor had a grandfather by the maternal side sent to Botany Bay? What difference does it make to the Vicar that his father’s sister—the thing having been carefully concealed—ran away with the groom? All these stories are clean forgotten and out of people’s minds; so that the sins of the fathers do not seem always to pursue the generations which come after. Yet there are some hereditary disgraces which nothing but the waters of Lethe can wash away. Where is that benevolent stream? In what region, in what unknown corner of the earth does its current flow? How shall we find it so that we may make that which hath been vanish away and become as if it had never been? There is a way—religious men tell us that way—by which things

may be forgiven; but I have never yet heard any method by which they can be forgotten.

I suppose it was somewhere about two o'clock in the morning when Claude sat down upon the tombstone, his mind torn by these and a thousand other thoughts, which took shape in the twilight and flitted before his eyes like ghosts in the deep shadows of the place. The headstones became faces which mocked and jeered at him; he saw the figure of himself wandering in the dark shadows with downcast eyes and bowed and shameful head; the shades of Valentine and Violet fell at his feet, weeping and sobbing for shame and disgrace; his brother Sam stood before him with clenched fist, grinding teeth, and helpless rage in his eyes; Melenda turned away in humiliation from her friends and hid her proud face; and his mother wept because the thing she had concealed so long from her children had come to light at last. The night was not dark, but there were black depths beneath the trees and in the recesses of the church; there was such a dim suggestion of light as is favourable for a procession of ghosts. Presently there arose a young moon in the east; the sky was clear and the air was quite still. The silence fell upon his heart, but it did not soothe him. The dead men lying around him tried to whisper comfort in his ear—'We have lived; we have suffered; we are dead. Our suffering is over; yet a little while and no shame or disgrace can touch you—your lot shall be with us.' Yet the words brought no consolation. Then the still soft air of the night lay upon his cheek and murmured gently—'Live out thy life. This thing can do thee no harm; go on as if it had never been.' And again, 'Bear it alone and bear it with brave heart, for the sake of those who might be crushed beneath the burden.' But these words failed to comfort him. And again—we are a scoffing and an infidel generation; but in all times of sickness, sorrow, or any kind of adversity, there are certain words which rise up in the mind of every Englishman, though he believe in nothing at all but his own infallibility. They come out of an old Book which it is a fashion with some to dishonour, to neglect, and even to deride—so in Claude's mind there arose and lingered certain words which need not be set down concerning strength and trust, and presently he lifted his head and saw the grey dawn spreading in the East, and heard the birds twitter in the trees around him. Then he got up—the air was cold—and he shivered. It was light enough now to see things clearly outlined in the chill morning light. He tried the handle of the door of the

Great South Porch—by great good fortune it was open. Within there is a bench on either side—he thought he would sit down there. But he tried the handle of the church-door. Wonderful accident! That, too, was open, and he stepped within the church. It was fast growing lighter; the painted windows—the lower windows are all painted in Tottenham Church—were beginning to show a glow of colour, and a pale light shone in the clerestory windows, making the bays and aisles and columns mysterious and ghostly. Then the windows grew brighter, and the colours warmer, and presently the east sprang suddenly into splendour when the sun rose and the colours fell upon pillar and on wall, painting in crimson, blue, and gold the figures of Ferdinando Heyborne and Richard Kandeler and Eliza his wife. With the daylight the ghosts and devils of the night fled shrieking, and Claude stood upright, facing the splendid sunshine, and remembered that he was a man, with a man's work before him, and a man's duty to bear, and his burden to endure, and his honour in his own hand, and that the past was dead. Wherefore—I do not explain the phenomenon, but I state it—while his strength and courage came back to him, and he felt once more the power of his will, and peace returned to his soul, his eyes overflowed with tears, and he sat down and hid his face in his hands, and then—he fell fast asleep.

It was nearly eight o'clock when he awoke and went out of the church. The business of the day, so far as concerned the birds in the gardens round the churchyard, was already pretty well over, because the sun, who gets up about half-past five at this season of the year, was already nearly halfway towards high noon. It was too late, moreover, to see his brother, who would now be on his way to the workshop, or perhaps already deranging somebody's pipes, laying the foundations for an attack of typhoid, or for a boiler explosion, or an overflow of the bath, or an escape of gas—for Joe was really clever in his own line. But that mattered nothing. Now, he was not going to tell Joe or any one else at all. It should be his own secret.

'I wish, however,' he said, 'that I had a clothes-brush. And my boots would be all the better for a little attention. I'll go and see my mother.'

She was already dressed and in her arm-chair. To his astonishment Valentine was there too. The fire was burning brightly, the kettle was singing, the cloth was spread, and she was making the tea, looking fresh and bright enough to raise the spirits of a man going in for a competitive examination.

'That is the step of my boy,' cried the old lady, while he was yet afar off.

'Claude !' cried Valentine. 'You here at this hour ?'

Claude stooped and kissed his mother.

'Give him a kiss, Polly,' she said, in the quick peremptory tone with which she ordered her daughter about. 'Can't you kiss your own brother, child ?'

Valentine blushed but obeyed—that is to say, she offered her hand as a substitute for her cheek.

'Suppose,' said Claude, when he had paid this knightly homage—'suppose I had got up early in order to walk here and have breakfast with you, mother ? But how is it you are here too, Valentine ?'

'I stayed with mother all night because her nerves were a little shaken, and I did not like her to be alone.'

'We're glad to see you, my dear. Polly, go and buy two or three eggs and a bit o' bacon. The boy must be hungry. Have you got any money, child ? Now, run, my dear ; make haste.'

Valentine nodded to Claude, and laughed and ran upon her errand.

'She's a real good girl, Claude,' said the old lady. 'That's what she is, mind ; there's nobody like Polly. Don't you let her be put upon by Melenda. She's got a heart of gold, and she thinks of everything. Last night I had a dreadful fright—oh ! a most terrible fright, and it put me all of a shake——'

'What was it, mother ?'

'My dear, I thought I heard a footstep—it was a footstep that I knew, and the second time I heard it—the step of a dead man—your father, Claude. It was only a dream, I know ; because Polly, she came in a minute or two afterwards, and she said there was nobody. But it gave me such a shake as I never had before ; I haven't felt like myself ever since. But Polly, she don't mind staying here.'

'What time was it, mother ?'

'In the evening, about eight o'clock. Polly stayed all night with me because I was afraid.'

'And you—you heard nothing more, did you ?'

'No—nothing more. It was only a dream, you see. But it gave me a terrible turn. When a person is blind, she feels these fancies more than most.'

'Don't think any more about it,' said Claude. It must have been the step of his father ; but how was it that Valentine

saw no one? And how could his father have got his Temple address?

Then Valentine came back with her purchases.

'You don't look well, Claude,' she said. 'You have dark rings round your eyes and you are pale. Have you been walking too far before breakfast? or have you been working too hard?'

'I am very well—but I thought you were looking pale, Valentine. There is nothing the matter, is there?'

'What should there be?' she answered with the approved evasion.

Involuntarily they watched each other, both thinking of the dreadful secret they knew and would keep from each other. And once Claude met Valentine's eyes, and he felt, wondering, that they were full of pity. Why did she pity him? Yet, if she knew, —oh! how greatly would she pity him? He could not mistake that expression, which would be read and understood by the merest beginner in the art of thought-reading. Why did Valentine pity him? She knew nothing.

'Eat your egg while it's hot, my dear,' said the old lady, pleased to have her boy with her. 'You were always a famous boy for an egg. Polly, my dear, cut his bread and butter thick. And plenty of sugar in his tea. What a boy he used to be for sugar, to be sure! Claude, it's twelve years and more since you had your breakfast with your mother. If I could only see you—oh! dear, dear—if I could only see you with my own eyes as I used to see you, eating hearty as you used to eat. I suppose you've grown out of bread and dripping—Polly, is the bacon kept hot for him? Don't let him say we sent him away hungry. I hope the loaf is to your liking, my boy! I wish we had some jam for him. Cut him a crusty bit, Polly. He used to like the crust. You and me can eat the crumb'—and so on, because her boy was at breakfast with her; and because, as women use, she made a king of him, and of herself and her daughter she made his slaves.

Claude ate and drank, being hungry after his night in the open, and he tried to laugh and joke. Between him and Valentine—each saw it and thought it hidden from the other—stood the spectre of a grey-headed man, with cunning eyes and smooth face, holding out his hands for more, and threatening to turn all their innocent joy into mourning; and all their pride into shame!

(*To be continued.*)

Legend of the Maid of all Work.

'TWIXT Kensington and Drury Lane
 Are four long miles. The road is plain,
 For I have trod it, all the way.
 It was the glory of the spring,
 And westward I went wandering
 Upon my one whole holiday.

The world grew brighter, more and more,
 A different look men's faces wore;
 But I was lonely and half lost,
 As they an alien people were.
 I think that no one saw me there
 More than a shadow or a ghost.

But oh the Gardens, wide and green!
 And oh the long, long miles between!
 Yet when the weary day is done,
 I sleep, I am too tired to pray,
 And then God lets me steal away,
 Four miles away, to Kensington.

So swift the dream! I seem to wait
 A moment, trembling, at the gate—
 It's Paradise that lies before.
 There blows a cool, refreshing breeze,
 And the grass knows me, and the trees,
 And then I am afraid no more.

How soon it fades—delightful thing!
 There's a chill mist comes gathering,
 And music dies, and once again
 I hear the caged birds cry and cry
 As Seven Dials I pass by,
 I enter into Drury Lane.

But once, I never shall forget
How, dreaming or awake, I met
 A lady in that pleasant land.
Oh, fair she was to look upon !
Smiling she gave me, and was gone,
 A bunch of lilies from her hand.

Now sometimes, in that hardest time
Of sultry noonday, when I climb,
 Half faltering, up the dizzy stair,
When the walls stagger, turn like wheels,
The fragrance of the lilies steals
 Pure through the hot and stifling air,

I think folk never grow so base
In such a pleasant dwelling-place.
 They can give smiles to every one;
I think they all are good and kind,
That flowers are always there to find,
 In happy, happy Kensington.

Thistles.

THERE is no weed weedier or more ubiquitous than the common thistle. In paradise, it is true, if we may trust John Milton and the Sunday-school books—wise, as usual, beyond what is written—there were no thorns or thistles; the creation and introduction of the noxious tribe upon this once innocent and thornless earth being a direct consequence of the fall of man, and a stern retribution for Adam's delinquency. But since then the thistle has managed so to diffuse itself over the habitable globe that there hardly now remains a spot on earth without its own local representative of that ever-intrusive and conquering genus. Wherever civilised man goes, there the thistle accompanies him as a matter of course in his various wanderings. It adapts itself to all earthly environments. Close up to the arctic circle you find it defying the indigenous reindeer with its prickly wings; under an equatorial sky you may observe it accommodating itself most complacently with a sardonic smile to tropical existence, and battling with the prickly cactuses and the thorny acacias, to the manner born, for its fair share of the dry and arid uplands. Even nettles are nowhere in competition with it: in spite of its valuable and irritating sting, the nettle has not the plasticity and adaptability of constitution that mark the stout and sturdy thistle tribe. Garnered and harvested yearly with the farmer's corn, its seeds have been gratuitously distributed by its enemy man in all climates; and when once it gains the slightest foothold, its winged down enables it to diffuse itself *ad infinitum* through the virgin soil of yet unconquered and unthistly continents. A field of thistles in England itself is a beautiful sight for the enthusiastic botanist (who has usually a low opinion of the agricultural interest); but in the fresh and fallow earth of New Zealand they attain a yet more prodigious and portentous stature, that might well strike awe and dismay into the stout heart of a Berkshire farmer.

The fact is, the thistle is one of those bellicose plants

which specially lay themselves out, in the struggle for existence, for the occupation of soils where they are compelled to defend their leaves and stems from the constant attacks of the larger herbivores. On open plains and wide steppes, much browsed over in the wild state by deer or buffalo, and in the degenerate civilised condition by more prosaic cows and donkeys, one may always note that only the prickliest and most defensive plants have any chance of gaining a livelihood. Gorse and blackthorn form the central core of the little bushy clumps on our English commons, grown over thickly with bramble and dog-rose, or interspersed every here and there with occasional taller masses of may and holly. Nay, at times even naturally undefended species assume a protective armour under such special circumstances, as in the case of the pretty little pink rest-harrow, which grows close to the ground with soft stems and leaves where unmolested by cattle, but quickly develops an erect and stiffly thorny variety when invaded by troops of cows or horses. In that case the unarmed specimens get eaten down in a short time by the browsing cattle, and only those which happen to possess any slight tendency in a prickly direction are left to occupy the stubborn soil and produce seed for the next generation. It is this unconscious selective action of the larger herbivores which has at last produced the general prickliness of all the plants that naturally frequent rich and open lowland pastures.

There are differences, however, between prickles and prickles. Some plants are positively aggressive, like the stinging-nettle; others are merely and strictly defensive, like the common thistle, whose proud motto, as everybody well knows, is '*Nemo me impune lacessit*.' In the very doubtful Latinity of the Licensed Victuallers, it goes in strictly for '*Defensio non Provocatio*;' whereas the nettle, it need hardly be said, is often most distinctly provoking, and even goes out of its way to annoy a neighbour. This distinction I take to depend upon a difference in the acquired habits of the two races. The nettle is almost entirely a product of urban civilisation: it hangs about the streets and outhouses of small villages, the neighbourhood of farmyards, and the immediate surroundings of rural man. It lives in constant expectation, as it were, of being browsed upon by donkeys, or trampled under foot by cattle, or picked by children, or stubbed up root and all by the ruthless farmer. Hence its temper has become permanently soured, and it has at last developed a restless, feverish, wasp-like habit of stinging everybody who comes within arm's

length of it. It is necessary to the safety of the nettle, in fact, that it should give you warning of its presence at once, and induce you to keep well away from it under pain of a serious and lasting smart. Our common English nettle, which grows everywhere along road-sides and waste places, is bad enough in this respect; but the smaller nettle, a foreign importation of more strictly civilised and urban habits, never found far from human habitations, is still crueller and more poisonous; while the South European Roman nettle, accustomed for innumerable generations to the fierce struggle against Italian civilisation, has developed an advanced and excruciating sting, which beats the puny efforts of our own species into complete insignificance, as the virus of the hornet beats the virus of the hive-bee.

On the other hand, the thistle family are far more truly rural and agricultural in their habits, being denizens of the open fields and meadows, less dependent than the nettles upon richness of soil, and readily accommodating themselves to all vacant situations. Hence they have only felt the need of arming themselves in a rough and ready prickly fashion against the probable assaults of their natural enemies. They have forged darts, but have not learned to poison them. Their prickly leaves and wings are amply sufficient for defence, without the necessity for developing a virulent juice to be injected into the very veins of their savage aggressors. Natural selection can never push any special line of evolution further than is imperatively called for by the wants and circumstances of the particular species. It always necessarily leaves off just at the point where the protection afforded is fully sufficient to guard the kind from the possibility of extinction. The thistles have found in actual practice that prickles alone are quite enough to secure their boasted immunity from extraneous attacks: the nettles have practically discovered for themselves that without stings they would soon be landed in the final limbo of utter nonentity.

Circumstances have still preserved for us a very tolerable series of the successive stages whereby our existing thistles have gradually acquired their present prickly and repellent characteristics. In the good old days, while evolution was still fighting hard for public recognition, it used to be urged by the un-instructed outsider that we never found any 'missing links.' As a matter of fact, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the links are not and never were missing at all; and the practical difficulty is rather to establish any well-marked distinctions of kind than to

discover long series of intermediate individuals. Just as the white man gradually merges into the negro by slow steps, when we cross Europe, Asia, and Africa, through Italians, Greeks, Levantines, Arabs, Egyptians, Nubians, Abyssinians, and true Soudanese, so the various kinds of thistles merge imperceptibly one into the other by innumerable varieties and natural hybrids. To be sure, there *are* such things as well-marked species in nature; but there are also groups which it is impossible anywhere to split up into good and distinctly different kinds. The brambles, the wild roses, the St. John's-worts, and the epilobes absolutely defy regular classification: the thistles, though perhaps a little more amenable to the subtle arts of the artificial species-maker, still constantly glide one into the other by strangely graduated intermediate forms. The great *crux* really lies in the problem of the existence of such natural gradations; for, according to the strict Darwinian principles, the better adapted and more specialised forms ought to crush out the intermediate types, and leave the species well demarcated one from the other by broad intervals. Probably the true explanation of the anomaly is to be found in the wide distribution and high adaptability of these dominant forms; they can accommodate themselves exactly to such an extraordinary variety and diversity of situations, that special intermediate types answer best in every intermediate soil or climate.

The most primitive and unarmed class of the thistle tribe is well represented by the sawwort of our copses, a true thistly plant in all its general appearance and habits, but absolutely devoid of thorns or prickles. The leaves, indeed, are toothed and pointed, but the points never project into fierce spines, as in the more advanced kinds; and even the little scales that form a cup for the flower-head, though faintly stiff and sharp, are scarcely if at all defensive in character. The flower, of course, is usually the first part to be specially protected, because upon it depend the future seeds and the hope of coming generations of thistles. Just as instinct teaches female animals to fight fiercely and bravely for their young, so natural selection teaches menaced plants to arm themselves stoutly against the threatening depredators of their seeds and blossoms. The reason why the sawwort and its unarmed South European allies have managed to do without the protective inventions of their more developed relations is no doubt because they live mostly in thickets and woody places, not much overrun by cattle or horses. Their neighbours in the open

meadows and pastures have been compelled long since to adopt more military tactics in order to save themselves from premature extinction. Often, indeed, in a close-cropped paddock, you will find only two kinds of tall plant uneaten by the beasts--the meadow buttercup, preserved from harm by its acrid juices, and the creeping thistle, armed all round with its long rows of parallel prickles.

In the mountains of Wales and the north of England there is yet another kind of true thistle, classed as such by technical botanists (for the sawwort is artificially relegated to a distinct genus), which is also destitute of prickles on the leaves, though it sometimes shows the first faint beginnings of a prickly tendency around the scaly flower-cup, and in the bristly teeth of its crinkled leaves. From this early stage in the evolution of thistledom we can trace the gradual steps in the defensive process, through thistles that grow with prickly leaves, and those in which the prickly margins begin to run a little down the stem, to those which have clad themselves from top to toe in a perfect mail of sharp spines, so that it becomes quite impossible to grasp them anywhere with the hand, and they can only be eradicated by the hoe or plough. It is a significant fact that the most persistent and troublesome of all these highly developed kinds, the creeping thistle, now universally diffused by man over the globe, is a special weed of cultivation, far most frequently found in tilled fields, and seldom disputing with the simpler forms the open moors, mountains, or pastures. It does not trust entirely, like others of its kind, to its floating seeds, blown about everywhere as they are by their light tag of thistle-down; but it creeps insidiously underground for many yards together, sending up from time to time its annual stems, and defying all the attempts of the agricultural interest to exterminate it bodily by violent measures. This is the common and familiar pale purplish thistle of our English corn-fields, and there can be little doubt that it has developed its curious underground habits by stress of constant human warfare, especially with the ploughshare. Thus the very efforts we make at fighting nature defeat themselves: if we persistently hoe down the stems and leaves of an obnoxious weed, the weed retaliates by sending out hidden subterranean suckers, and the last state of the agriculturist is worse than the first.

On the close-cropped chalk downs of our southern counties there is another curious form, the stemless thistle, which shows in another way the hard struggle of nature to keep up appearances

under the most difficult and apparently hopeless circumstances. Among the low sward of those chalky pastures, nibbled off incessantly as fast as it springs up by whole herds of Southdowns, no plant that normally raised its head an inch above the surface would have a chance of flowering without being eaten down at once by its ruthless enemies. So the local dwarf or stemless thistle has adopted a habit of expanding its very prickly leaves in a flat rosette or spreading tuft close to the ground, and bearing its blossoms on the level of the soil, pressed as tight as possible against the short turf beneath. The appearance of these three or four dwarfed and stunted but big flower-heads, bunched thickly together in the middle of their flat leaves, is most quaint and striking when once one's attention is called to their existence: yet so unobtrusive and unnoticeable is the entire plant that few people save regular botanists ever discover the very fact of its presence on the chalk downs. It is only one out of a large group of specialised chalk plants, all of which similarly creep close to the ground, while a few of them actually bury their own seeds in the soil by a corkscrew process, so as to escape the teeth of the all-devouring sheep. The power of producing a stem, however, is rather dormant than lost in the dwarf thistle, for under favourable circumstances and in deep soil it will raise its flowers eight or ten inches above the surrounding turf.

The question what particular plant ought to be identified with the stiff, heraldic Scotch thistle has long been debated, somewhat uselessly, it must be acknowledged, amongst botanists and antiquaries. For heraldry is not particular as to species and genus: it is amply satisfied with a general rough resemblance which would hardly suit the minute requirements of those microscopical observers who distinguish some forty kinds of native British blackberries. However, it has been amicably decided in the long run that the heraldic symbol of Scotland, that proud plant which no man injures unavenged, is not to be considered a thistle at all, but an onopord, a member of a neighbouring though distinct genus, whose Greek name expressly marks it out as the favourite food of—how shall I put it with becoming dignity?—the domestic beast of Oriental monarchs. To what base uses may we come at last! The royal emblem of the north, as identified by Mr. Bentham and other profound authorities, is now at last settled to be nothing more nor less than the cottony donkey-thistle. North of the Tweed this identification should be mentioned, as French newspapers remark, under all reserves.

Almost all the thistles have purple florets, and purple, it may be safely assumed, is the primitive colour of the whole thistle-head tribe. Some of them, indeed, fade off gradually into pink and white; but such reversion to a still earlier ancestral hue is everywhere common and easily brought about by stress of circumstances. The thistles in the lump are composites by family, and the apparent flower is really a flower-head, containing an immense number of small bell-shaped, five-petalled florets, with the petals united at their base into a deep tube. The honey rises high in the throat within, and is sucked chiefly by bees and burnet moths, who form the principal fertilisers of the entire group. Purple is the favourite colour of these advanced flower-haunters, and it seems probable that all the purple blossoms in nature have been evolved by their constant and long-extended selective action. Nothing can be more interesting than to watch a great burly humble-bee (one of the large black sort) bustling about from flower-head to flower-head of the pretty drooping welshed thistle on a bright summer's day, with his proboscis constantly extended in search of food, and unconsciously carrying the pollen-grains about his head and legs from the florets of one blossom to the sensitive surface of the next in order.

After the flowers have been duly fertilised, the thistle seeds begin to swell, and the down around them to grow dry and feathery. This down, so familiar to all of us among the autumn fields, has doubtless played no small part in the dispersal of the thistles. It is to their floating seeds (or rather, to be strictly accurate, their fruits) that the entire family owe a great part of their existing vogue and unpopularity. In almost all the composites the tiny calyx grows out into much the same silky down on the ripe fruit, but in hardly any other case, save perhaps those of the dandelion and the common sow-thistle, does it form so light and airy a floating apparatus as in the true thistles. Wafted about on the wings of the wind, the thistle-down is blown easily hither and thither, alighting everywhere, far and near, and finding out fresh spots for itself to root and thrive on every side. Not only does this plan insure the proper dispersal of the seeds, however: it also provides for that most important agricultural need, the rotation of crops. Long before scientific farming had hit upon the now familiar rotatory principle, hundreds and hundreds of plants in the wild state had worked it out practically for themselves under stress of the potent modifying agency of natural selection. For thistles can no more grow on the same

spot for an indefinite number of generations than corn or turnips can; they require to let the soil on which they live lie fallow for a while from time to time, or be occupied by other and less exhausting crops. Hence it follows that in nature innumerable means exist for favouring or insuring the dispersal of seeds; or, to speak more correctly, only those plants in the long run succeed in surviving which happen to possess some such facility for constant rotation and occupation of fresh districts.

It is very interesting in this respect to compare the devices for the distribution of their seeds in some of the thistle's own nearest and best-known relations. The burdock, for example, is in flower and fruit almost a thistle, though it differs considerably from the thistles proper in its large, broad, heart-shaped foliage. But the burrs, or ripe flower-heads, instead of being surrounded, thistle fashion, by a very defensive prickly involucre, have developed instead hooked points to their bracts, which catch at once at the wool of sheep, the legs of cattle, and the dresses or trousers of wayfaring humanity. In this way the entire head of seeds gets carried about from place to place, and rubbed off at last against a hedge or post (at least by its unwilling four-footed carriers), where it forms the nucleus of a fresh colony, and starts in life under excellent auspices, especially if dropped (as it is apt to be) in the immediate neighbourhood of a well-manured farmyard. Hence the burdock has no further need for the down which it inherits, like all its tribe, from some remote common ancestor; it has substituted a new and more practically effective system of transport *en bloc*, for the old general composite mode of dispersal in single seeds by a feathery floating apparatus. Accordingly, the pappus, or ring of down, though it still exists as a sort of dying rudiment on each fruitlet of the burrs, is reduced greatly in size and expansion, and consists of a mere fringe of short stiff hairs, useful perhaps in preventing flies from laying the eggs of their destructive grubs upon the swelling seeds. In the common knapweeds, again, which wait for a high wind to shake out their seeds from the head, this dwarfing of the down has proceeded much further, so that at first sight a careless observer would never notice its existence at all: but if you look close at the ripe fruit with a small pocket lens you will observe that it is topped by a ring of very minute scaly bristles, occasionally intermixed with a few longer and hairier ones, which are all that now remain of the once broad and feathery down. Among the true thistles, on the other hand, which trust entirely to the

gentle summer breezes for dispersal, and which float away often for miles together, innumerable gradations of featheriness exist, some species having the down composed of long, straight, undivided hairs; while in others of a more advanced type it consists of regular feathered blades, barbed on either side with the most delicate beauty. Almost all our commonest and most troublesome English thistles belong to this last-named very feathery type, whose seeds are, of course, enabled to float about on the wind far more readily and to greater distances than the simple-haired varieties.

The thistle pedigree is a long and curious one. The group forms, apparently, the central and most primitive existing tribe of the composite family, and it bears in its own features the visible marks of a vast previous evolutionary history. Starting apparently from blossoms with five distinct and separate yellow petals, like the buttercups, the ancestors of thistlehood gradually progressed, as it seems, by insect selection, to a condition something like that of the harebell or the Canterbury bell, in which the petals have coalesced at their bases into a single large and united tube. Clustering together next into closely serried heads, like those of the scabious, the rampions, and the common blue sheepsbit, they endeavoured to make up for the individual minuteness of their dwarfed flowers by the number and mass collected in a group on the summit of each stem. In this way they gradually assumed the distinctive crowded composite form, each floret consisting of a tubular five-lobed corolla, a calyx reduced to hairs or down, and a single tiny seed-like fruit. Of this stage in the development of the family, the simpler and less specialised members of the thistle group, such as the unarmed sawworts and the alpine saussurea, are now the best surviving representatives. From some such early central form, the evolving composites split up and diversified themselves into all their astonishing and almost incredible existing variety. Some of them, varying but little in minor details from the parent stock, acquired prickly leaves and grew into the thistle kind, or developed hooked and sticky involucre, and were known as burdocks. Others, producing at their edge a row of brilliantly coloured and attractive florets, which serve the purpose of petals for the compound head, branched off into all the marvellous wealth of daisies, asters, sunflowers, marigolds, dahlias, golden-rods, ox-eyes, and cinerarias. In yet others the whole mass of the florets, central as well as external, has assumed this ray-like or strap-like form;

and to this group belong the dandelions, hawkweeds, salsifies, lettuces, sow-thistles, chicories, nippleworts, and catsears. By far the most successful of all flowering plants, the composites have taken possession in one form or another of the whole world: and among the entire wealth of their extraordinary diversity there is no group more universally fortunate than the common thistle. What from the purely agricultural point of view we describe as a very persistent and almost ineradicable weed, from the higher biological point of view we should more properly regard as a dominant and admirably adapted species of plant. The one conception is merely narrow, practical, and human; the other is positive, philosophical, and universal.

GRANT ALLEN.

Prince Coresco's Duel.

IT was on a beautiful afternoon in the month of May that Prince Coresco left his Roumanian home and set out for Paris. How glad he was to go! how delightful it was to him to contemplate the very name of his destination, printed upon his railway ticket! We, on this side of the Channel, shall never quite understand what Paris means to the fashionable and would-be fashionable young men of continental Europe. To them it is still—even in these days of republican government and diminished glory—the capital of the world, the centre of civilisation, the city in comparison with which all other cities are but provincial towns. They take their tone from it; they assimilate, to the best of their ability, the little tricks of speech and manner in vogue amongst those who claim to lead its society; their great ambition is to pass themselves off as being in reality what they more or less skilfully counterfeit, and their ambition is doomed to perpetual disappointment. For if the model in question does not, to impartial eyes, appear a particularly noble or inspiring one, it has at least the peculiarity of being quite inimitable; and one may safely say that no foreigner, whether Russ, Pole, Spaniard, or uncertain cosmopolitan Hebrew, ever has been, or ever will be, mistaken for a true Parisian.

Prince Coresco, however, though not the rose, had lived very near the rose. He was well known in Parisian clubs and at Longchamps and Vincennes and other places where people lose money; he lost his money (of which he had plenty) with a very good grace; and as, in truth, he was a well-meaning, kind-hearted, and simple-minded creature, he was liked as much as he was laughed at—which is saying a good deal. Not that he ever suspected his friends and acquaintances of laughing at him; it would have been a cruel blow to him if he had discovered that he was in any way a subject for mirth. To be accused of idleness

or extravagance, he could endure; his mother sometimes did accuse him of these sins. But if there was one thing that he was more certain of than another, it was that no one had the right to call him ridiculous. He had taken such pains to avoid the possibility of incurring that reproach. All that mortal man could do towards denationalising himself he had done; not for worlds would he have shown himself at any European court in the magnificent costume of his ancestors, which would have suited his handsome face and slim figure so admirably. A story used to be told of one of his compatriots, who, being present at a great function at Berlin, clad in the semi-military garb in question, was noticed by a high Prussian personage, who eagerly inquired his rank. '*C'est un Moldo-Valaque, monseigneur,*' was the answer of the well-informed person applied to. '*Si jeune, et déjà Moldo-Valaque!*' cried the high personage graciously, for, of course, he did not wish to appear ignorant of any foreign grades, however unfamiliar in sound. Some side-wind wafted this anecdote to Paris and, most untruthfully, made our friend Prince Coresco the hero of it. '*Si jeune, et déjà Moldo-Valaque!*' the young men at the club used to cry, pointing to his decorations, when he strolled in late at night, after attending some official reception. He had to give up wearing his decorations in consequence; he did not like to be reminded of those remote Danubian wilds where his estates lay. But he never showed any annoyance; his countenance at all times and under all circumstances was perfectly impassive. It is not correct to exhibit emotion, and Coresco was *très-correct*. Those young men occasionally called him *Correcto*; and he was not displeased with the nickname.

Now, as he took his place in the orient-express, and seated himself in the corner of the little compartment reserved for him, he was a model of correctness from the tips of his waxed moustache down to those of his little shiny-leather boots. His dark-coloured kid gloves were quite new; between his fingers he held a cigarette made of the choicest tobacco that money could procure; he crossed one shapely leg over the other and looked gravely contented. He conceived, indeed, that he had good reason to be so. He had at last reached the end of the long dreary winter; he had escaped from the dissipations of Bucharest, which were distasteful to him, as one accustomed to better things; above all, he had escaped from the matrimonial engagement into which his mother had tried so hard to inveigle him;

and now he was going to live once more. It was a little late in the year, to be sure ; but Paris is never really empty until after the Grand Prix ; he would find plenty of his old associates at the club ; the old whirligig of pleasure, which he was too young to have wearied of, would be all ready and waiting for him.

Thus, with his head full of agreeable anticipations, he gazed languidly out of the window at the vast, monotonous plains, at the bars of bright yellow drawn across them, here and there, by the mustard fields, at the oxen dragging their primitive carts along the unmetalled roads, at the shaggy, bearded peasants who turned to stare at the train as it rushed past. '*Adieu, canaille !*' he murmured between his teeth.

As the shades of night began to fall, Prince Coreesco grew hungry and, getting up, passed into the adjoining restaurant-car, where many of his fellow-passengers were already seated at dinner. To ordinary travellers, accustomed to snatch hasty meals when and where they can get them, it appears something like the height of luxury to be permitted to sit down to a very fairly cooked dinner without leaving their train ; but Coreesco was fastidious, and the fare set before him did not earn his approval. He made a grimace, shrugged his shoulders slightly, and partook of it with resignation. He did not much like the company in which he found himself either. It was composed of the usual horde of tourists returning homewards from the East—vociferous Germans, self-asserting Americans, and those astonishing English old maids who are to be met with in such profusion in every country under the sun, except their own. They were all rather dirty, shabby, and travel-stained. Coreesco turned up his nose at them ; he could not admit that people have any business to be dirty because they are on a journey. He himself was as spick-and-span as a new pin, and meant to remain so up to the moment of his arrival at the Paris terminus.

However, he ended by acknowledging that there were two individuals in this unattractive throng who might claim exemption from his vote of censure. Strictly speaking, there was only one ; but he generously threw in the mother for the sake of the daughter. And indeed the younger of the two ladies who occupied the table facing his own was so charming in appearance that no one, looking at her, could have thought it worth while to waste time in criticising the elder. Her golden-brown hair, her soft hazel eyes and long eyelashes would have sufficed in themselves to insure for her the admiration of any appreciative stranger ; but, in addition

to these gifts, she had a something—a sort of frank friendliness of air, a mixture of innocence and hardihood, due evidently to childish ignorance of all evil, which is always especially fascinating to hardened men of the world, such as Coreasco believed himself to be. He was not, as a rule, particularly fond of English people, whom he considered an ill-mannered race, but he was very fond of pretty faces, and the more he studied this one the more he became interested in it. He went so far as to say to himself that it was the prettiest face he had ever seen in his life.

After a time he saw it under a suddenly changed aspect. An animated colloquy had begun between the two ladies; the elder was making gestures of despair; she dived into her pockets; she turned out the contents of her travelling-bag; she fled from the dining-car and presently returned, red in the face and gasping: it was as plain as could be that she had mislaid her railway tickets.

‘They are gone!—gone!’ Coreasco heard her exclaim tragically. ‘The last time I saw them was on the boat, crossing the Danube, when those tiresome people came bothering for them, and I must have laid them down on the seat beside me. Very likely they were blown overboard. And the worst of it is that I have no money—only about two pounds! I wrote to the bankers to send us circular notes to Vienna. Oh, Daisy, what *shall* we do?’

Miss Daisy’s face grew long, her eyebrows were raised distressfully; the corners of her mouth came down; it really looked very much as if she might be going to cry. This was more than the gallant Roumanian could bear. It is not correct to address total strangers; he had never been guilty of such a solecism before, yet there are occasions on which conventionality must yield to chivalry. He rose in his deliberate way, approached the ladies, made a low bow, bringing his heels together with a click, and said:—

‘Pardon me, you are in a difficulty about your tickets, I think. Can I be of any service to you? I am well known on this line.’

The girl who had been addressed as Daisy blushed and threw a grateful glance at the handsome, dark-complexioned young man who stood deferentially before her, hat in hand; the old lady broke out into voluble thanks.

‘Oh, how very kind of you! If you would be so good as to explain to these people that we really are not swindlers! They will believe you, no doubt; I dare say they wouldn’t believe us.

We took our tickets from Constantinople, as they can easily find out by telegraphing. Anyhow, I will gladly pay the price over again as soon as we reach Vienna, but at this moment, most unfortunately, I have not enough money in my purse.'

'Be at ease, madam,' replied Coresco; 'the affair shall be arranged at once.'

He spoke quite good English, with only a slight foreign accent, for he had had an English nurse in his childhood; he was very good-looking and distinguished in appearance and manners. The old lady beamed upon him and nodded to him as he left the car. In a few minutes he returned, bringing with him two fresh tickets. 'Search will be made for the others, madam, and if they are found your money will be given back to you,' he said.

'Oh, but—but——' stammered the old lady, reddening, 'I am afraid—have you *paid* for these tickets?'

Coresco smiled, showing his white teeth. He produced his card, scribbled beneath his name the address of his Paris club, and said, 'You are perhaps travelling also to Paris? When you shall arrive, I will send, with your permission, to claim my little debt.'

'Yes, we are going to Paris,' answered the old lady, 'but we shall not be there before the end of the week; we are stopping a day or two at Vienna. I don't think we ought—really, I am quite ashamed——'

However, she could hardly refuse to accept the helping hand held out to her in such dire extremity; possibly, too, she rather liked the notion of being beholden to a real live prince. It is a title which has always exercised a powerful influence upon the British imagination.

'My name is Wilton,' she said, 'I will give you my card; we shall be at the Hôtel du Louvre.'

There was a little conversation after this, but it was of a somewhat formal and constrained character. Coresco was shy (although he would have been profoundly astonished if any one had told him so); besides, it did not interest him very much to hear Mrs. Wilton's descriptions of Constantinople and of the deficiency of proper hotel accommodation in that city. Miss Wilton took no part in the colloquy. With her chin resting upon her hand, she sat gazing at the flying landscape, with her profile turned towards Coresco, who never removed his solemn black eyes from it. He wanted her to speak to him, but did not know

how to make her do so, for his experience of unmarried ladies and their ways was extremely restricted. All the recognition that he obtained from her was a smiling good-night, when she and her mother rose to leave the dining-car.

But the next morning, when he awoke, and, after performing his toilet with all the care and elegance that circumstances would admit of, pulled up his blind, he found that the train had already reached Szegedin in Hungary, and upon the platform there was a peasant-girl, with great bunches of lilies-of-the-valley, which she held up to him persuasively. He at once let down the window and purchased the whole of her stock-in-trade. Those pure white bells, those fresh green leaves, reminded him somehow of Miss Wilton, and he wondered whether he might venture to offer them to her. English people are so odd, he thought; you never can tell whether they are going to chill you with their prudery or take your breath away by their *sans-gêne*. Later in the day, when he found an opportunity of presenting his bouquet, he was almost awkward over it, in spite of the little set speech which he had prepared and which he duly delivered. He did not blush, because men of his complexion very rarely change colour. Miss Wilton did that for him; though she was far less embarrassed than he.

'Oh, what lovely flowers!' she exclaimed, burying her face in them. 'How kind of you! Thank you so much!'

'I should have given you marguerites, should I not?' said Coresco, with his slight accent. 'But they are common flowers—not worthy to bear your name.'

Miss Wilton laughed. 'I think Margaret is a pretty name,' she said, 'much prettier than *muguet*, for instance.'

'And Daisy,' said Coresco—'that is prettiest of all.'

He lingered almost lovingly over the enunciation of the word, and then suddenly felt ashamed of himself. Little as he knew about British maidens, he knew very well how to make love; but he was not going to turn his knowledge to account in this case. In his punctilious way, he felt that it would be inexcusable to force anything that might seem like attentions upon a lady whom he had just laid under an obligation.

But Miss Wilton was unaware of the existence of such scruples or of any occasion for them. She thought this handsome foreigner a very pleasant young fellow—a little stiff, perhaps, and not remarkably brilliant, but quite a gentleman. She began chatting to him about her home in England and her anxiety to

return thither, and the dislike to which she confessed for all modes of life that were not English. 'It is pleasant enough to see new countries, but one is always thankful to get back to one's own,' she said.

'That depends,' remarked Coresco, who, indeed, held a very different opinion.

'Well, I am thankful, at any rate. I don't think I should ever care to go abroad if mamma didn't enjoy it so much.'

She soon became entirely at her ease with her somewhat silent companion; she even found some of his remarks rather quaint and amusing; but when, in the course of the afternoon, she and her mother took leave of him at Vienna, with reiterated expressions of gratitude and of hope that he would call upon them in Paris, she had no sort of idea that the train bore away a Roumanian prince who was already three parts in love with her.

If a man be altogether in love there is not much to be done for him, and the malady must be left to run its course, but in cases which have not advanced beyond the stage of acute symptoms, alteratives may be employed with fair chance of success; and the truth is that, after Coresco had reached Paris and had been duly welcomed by his friends there, he did not think very much about Miss Daisy Wilton. Once or twice, to be sure, a vision of her fresh young face appeared to him in the wreaths of tobacco smoke which hung above the card-table; but it was so obviously out of place in that atmosphere that he frowned and dismissed it. He had plenty of other subjects to think about which, if less charming, were more exciting. At least he had always hitherto found them exciting; but now, to his surprise and alarm, it began gradually to dawn upon him that the excitements of former years had lost something of their aroma. He was not enjoying himself: it was lamentable, but it was undeniable. Could he be growing old before his time? To prove to himself that this was a groundless apprehension, he dived into deeper depths, played more recklessly, dined and supped in more uproarious company, and did all that in him lay to merit that reputation of a *viveur* which is so highly esteemed in certain circles. But it was all in vain; he only succeeded in earning for himself a perpetual headache and a dismal inward conviction that even the pleasures of Paris are doomed to pall upon one who has made too intimate acquaintance with them.

Turning into his club one morning, to breakfast, he found an

envelope addressed to him, which, on being opened, proved to contain a little bundle of bank-notes and an effusive letter, signed 'Margaret Wilton.' It struck him as a very absurd, not to say annoying, circumstance that Mrs. Wilton should bear the same name as her daughter. Margaret indeed, when she resembled nothing so much as a full-blown peony! However, it had to be remembered, in justice to the poor old woman, that neither her name nor her complexion were of her own choosing; and she wrote in a very friendly and amiable way. Would Prince Coreesco take pity upon two lonely travellers and dine quietly with them that evening, if he had no other engagement? They would be so glad to see him and to thank him again for his great kindness to them. 'We heard nothing more of our lost tickets,' Mrs. Wilton wrote; 'I suppose they must have been drowned in the Danube, and what would have become of us but for your timely aid I can't imagine.'

Well, of course, he had another engagement; but equally, of course, he could neglect it; and he did. At the hour appointed he arrayed himself in accurate evening dress, stuck an orchid in his buttonhole, as usual, and repaired to the Hôtel du Louvre, where he was rather amused to find that he was expected to dine in the public restaurant attached to that establishment. The ladies were in travelling costume; they had only a little hole of a sitting-room, Mrs. Wilton said, and it was impossible to get attended to upstairs. Would he excuse their lack of ceremony?

He made some appropriate reply which took a long time to deliver, and which Mrs. Wilton, who was garrulous and impatient, interrupted in the middle. Coreesco was not greatly fascinated by Mrs. Wilton, but, after all, it was not for the pleasure of seeing her that he was dining in that caravanserai, and she made up in cordiality what she wanted in style. Besides, he discovered before the evening was over that she had other merits of a more conspicuous kind. What French mother, what Roumanian mother, would have calmly announced after dinner that she was going to write letters in her bedroom, and would have left her daughter to entertain a strange young man in the little darkening *salon* which overlooked the Rue de Rivoli and the stream of carriages and pedestrians there? Yet that was what this amazing Mrs. Wilton did; and Coreesco quite loved her for it.

Nor did Miss Daisy appear to see anything odd or equivocal in the situation. Sitting by the open window, with her elbow on

the sill, she prattled away to her companion with as little reserve as if he had been her brother. She had a hundred questions to ask him about Paris—the Paris of the tourists, which was to him almost an unknown city—and when he confessed that he had only once in his life been inside the Louvre, she threw up her hands in utter astonishment.

‘Only once been in the Louvre! and yet you say you live so much in Paris? But what do you do with yourself, then, when you are here?’

‘I dine; I sleep; I pay visits to my friends; I go to the races when there are any,’ says Coresco, gravely enumerating such of his habits as could be communicated to a young lady.

‘And when you are not dining, or sleeping, or paying visits, and when there are no races?’

Coresco shrugged his shoulders. ‘There always remains the play,’ he remarked, smiling.

‘But don’t you think it is almost too hot for theatres at this time of year?’

‘I have used the wrong word, perhaps. You do not say the play? What I mean is the cards—the gambling.’

Miss Wilton looked very grave over this explanation. She thought Prince Coresco would be better employed in familiarising himself with the works of art in the Louvre than in winning other people’s money or losing his own, and, with a very pretty blush, she ventured to say as much. Encouraged by his silence and warming with her theme, she proceeded to read him a little lecture upon the duties and responsibilities of life. There is so much to do in the world, and there are so few people to do it! Most men must toil from morning to night only to keep themselves alive; and the rich, who have time and money—how can they expect to be pardoned if they squander both? Even innocent, healthy pleasures, such as hunting and shooting, ought not to be enough to fill anybody’s existence; but gambling was not innocent; it was very wicked. ‘It is almost like stealing, I think!’ Miss Daisy declared, trembling a little at her own audacity.

Coresco listened to it all, amused, charmed, puzzled. ‘Since you deign to interest yourself in so unworthy a person, mademoiselle,’ said he, ‘I shall try to reform myself.’

He went away at last in a strange and novel frame of mind. Undoubtedly there were ways in which his life admitted of reform, and he determined that reformed it should be; but never before had it occurred to him that gambling could be ‘very

wicked.' He did not, indeed, think it so now; still he actually refrained from going to the club that night, for Miss Daisy's sake. He went home, instead, and sat up until a late hour, placidly smoking cigar after cigar and recapitulating every word of the colloquy in which he had taken so small a part. Fresh horizons seemed to have suddenly opened out before him; in the course of a few hours a complete revolution had been effected in all his tastes and aspirations; he felt that he was capable of promising never to touch a card again. Cards!—as if the stale attractions of the gaming-table could compare for one moment with the delight of accompanying Miss Wilton to the Sainte-Chapelle and the Hôtel Cluny, as he had promised that he would do on the following day! He had, in short, fallen seriously in love for the first time in his life, and he was aware of the fact and rejoiced in it, as inexperienced persons frequently do.

It was commonly reported at this time that Coresco had left Paris; there were even some knowing individuals who could tell where he had gone and who had gone with him; nobody believed a preposterous legend to the effect that he had been seen driving down the Champs Elysées in an open *fiacre*, sitting with his back to the horses and facing two English ladies of respectable but quite unfashionable exterior. Yet this phenomenon, and others not less marvellous, might have been witnessed by Prince Coresco's friends, had they been in the habit of frequenting the places in which he spent three perfectly happy days. He would not have cared if they had seen him; he had soared to heights which the shafts of ridicule could not reach; he asked nothing better than to be permitted to attend Miss Daisy on her sight-seeing expeditions, to carry her cloak or her sunshade for her, to listen to her prattle and bask in her smiles. She was very kind and gracious to him; his attentions were evidently not displeasing to her; and as for Mrs. Wilton, she was more than gracious. 'I have the mother on my side,' Coresco thought, with modest exultation; 'that is half the battle.' It was natural that he should think so, having but a very slight knowledge of the social peculiarities of our free land.

But on the fourth day a cloud arose. Presenting himself at the Hôtel du Louvre after breakfast, as usual, Coresco was disagreeably surprised to find a long-legged, broad-shouldered, fair-haired young man lounging upon the sofa in the little sitting-room and reading the 'Times.' This intruder was made known to him as

Mr. Power; the ladies called him Jack, and explained that he was a distant cousin of theirs.

'Jack has come over from London to escort us home,' Mrs. Wilton said. 'He thinks we cannot take care of ourselves; though I don't know why he should think so, considering that we managed to travel through Palestine with only a dragoman to look after us.'

Coresco didn't know why either. He instantly conceived a strong prejudice against the officious Jack, which closer observation did not lessen, and which he had every reason to believe was returned with interest. If instinct had not told him at the first moment that Mr. Power was his rival, circumstances must in a very short time have revealed the fact to him. Their party that day consisted of four persons, and it was evident that all future expeditionary parties would be so constituted. Mr. Power's company was not asked for; he accorded it as a matter of course. This good-humoured, easy-going, and not over-polished young Briton had a way of looking at Miss Wilton which made Coresco's blood boil. It was not mere admiration that his blue eyes expressed—that might have been pardoned—it was simple, unconcealed adoration, with a shade of reproach and wonder in it. When he turned towards the Roumanian his brows contracted, and he scowled with just as little attempt at disguise. It seemed clear that he had either received or thought he had received great encouragement at some previous time.

What was consolatory was that his advances certainly did not meet with any encouragement now. Miss Wilton would not walk with him, would hardly speak to him, and more than once in the course of the day Mrs. Wilton pointedly begged him not to trouble himself with dancing attendance upon a couple of country cousins but to go away and see his friends.

'I always understood that you had such a number of friends in Paris, Jack, and that you enjoyed yourself so much with them. What is that game which you used to be so much addicted to, and which is always giving rise to such unpleasant scandals? Baccarat? Everybody has not the same tastes, fortunately. Prince Coresco, you, I am sure, are not a gambler.'

'Madam, I have abandoned the habit since a certain time,' said Coresco gravely.

Mr. Power laughed, and Coresco turned upon him at once. 'Monsieur finds that amusing?' he asked, with much urbanity.

'Awfully amusing; funniest thing I ever heard in my life!' answered the Englishman.

It was difficult to know what to make of such an unmannerly person ; but, in the presence of ladies, it was perhaps better to take no further notice of him. The worst of it was, that Mr. Power did not seem to object to that mode of treatment. It was in vain that his cousins showed him the cold shoulder ; he was neither to be offended nor to be shaken off ; and when Coresco left them in the evening he had to leave his rival in possession of the field.

For two days this annoying state of things continued. Coresco was not jealous, for Miss Wilton welcomed him with more than her usual warmth, and lost no opportunity of snubbing the intrusive Jack ; but, unfortunately, snubs did not prevent Jack from intruding and effectually putting a stop to those confidential and delightful conversations which good Mrs. Wilton had never attempted to cut short. In those unprogressive lands between which and Western civilisation Prince Coresco's native country forms a sort of link, there is a very simple way of getting rid of obnoxious persons : you simply kill them or have them killed, and there is an end of it. Coresco—being so highly civilised—did not contemplate poisoning Mr. Power's coffee ; but he really thought that he would be doing Miss Wilton a service by freeing her from attentions which were obviously disagreeable to her ; and that was why, finding himself alone with his rival under the archway of the hotel one evening, after escorting the ladies home from the opera, he profited by that opportunity to stamp his heel with considerable force upon the Englishman's toe.

Mr. Power caught up his leg and made use of the national expletive.

'Sir,' said Coresco, 'I do not permit any man to address such expressions to me.'

'I don't permit any man to tread on my toe, returned the other, laughing, for he did not at first realise that the provocation had been intentional.

A shrug of Coresco's shoulders enlightened him. 'Oh,' said he, 'you did it on purpose, did you ? All right, my friend ; then I'll see if I can't make you swear too.'

Thereupon he raised his hand, which was a large and powerful one, and, bringing it down with a resounding crash upon the crown of Coresco's tall hat, buried that gentleman's head in the ruin thereof.

It is not every one who, after being bonneted, can struggle out of his headgear and bow with dignity ; but Prince Coresco accomplished that feat and did not swear. 'You shall hear from

me to-morrow, sir,' was all that he said, as he majestically withdrew.

Mr. Power walked upstairs, sniggering to himself. 'I think I made my friend look rather a fool for once,' he muttered gleefully. 'What a pity that Daisy wasn't there to see him!'

Coresco would have been inexpressibly shocked if he had heard that ejaculation. To desire that a lady should be the spectator of a vulgar brawl!—atrocious! But Jack Power was not an ultra-refined person; he was only a very ordinary, honest, and somewhat devil-may-care young Englishman, who had fallen desperately in love with his pretty cousin during the preceding summer, and who, after some excuse had been given him for believing that his affection was returned, had been dismissed by a council of his cousin's family, upon the plea that his means were insufficient and his manner of life unsatisfactory. It was probably as much to remove her daughter from his vicinity as for any other reason that Mrs. Wilton had decided to spend the winter in the Holy Land. But Jack, in no wise discouraged, had changed his manner of life, had broken with sundry undesirable associates, and, by means of diligence, together with a little of such nepotism as is possible in these days, had obtained promotion in his calling, which was that of a Government clerk. Thus, confident in his personal merits and improved position, he had hastened over to Paris to meet his cousin on her return from those oriental wanderings, and had found her altered, distant, and, to all appearance, dazzled by the cheap glitter of a semi-oriental prince. If Mr. Power was in Prince Coresco's way, it is evident that Prince Coresco was not less in Mr. Power's way. The latter, however, being an Englishman, had not thought of getting rid of his rival by the simple expedient of treading upon his toe and then running him through the body; still, now that the chance of thus disposing of a pestilent fellow had been given to him, he was not unwilling to take advantage of it. Of the art of fencing he had that complete ignorance which must always be accounted as bliss when compared with partial knowledge; he imagined that one man with a sword in his hand is about as good as another similarly circumstanced, and had a comfortable conviction that weight must tell in the long run. This extraordinary young gentleman went peacefully to sleep with the idea that he could impale Prince Coresco, like a beetle upon a pin, if he chose, and his only fear was lest he should hurt the man mortally in so doing; for, of course, he did not want to kill him.

Coresco, on the other hand, though he did not propose to kill the Englishman, would have done so, at a pinch, without any

scruple at all. Why not? In a fair fight, one or other combatant must needs fall; and really there seemed to be no reason for supposing that Mr. Power's death would inflict any loss upon civilisation or humanity. What changed his point of view and caused him no slight perplexity was the discovery that a fight with Mr. Power would not, and could not, be in any sense a fair fight.

He found this out on the following afternoon, in a secluded, sylvan glade of the forest of Saint-Germain, which had been selected as suitable for the discharging of the business in hand. The preliminaries had passed off rapidly and with very little discussion. Power, who had numerous acquaintances in Paris, had easily found a couple of seconds; and as apologies were out of the question, no hitch or obstacle had occurred to delay the merry meeting. But what is to be done with a man who, the moment that his weapon has been crossed with yours, plunges at you like a born lunatic, in total disregard of all rule and science? Coresco had no difficulty in parrying his adversary's furious onslaught; he would have had little or no difficulty in terminating the conflict in the first two minutes; yet he hesitated to take advantage of his superior skill. It is probably much the same thing to a bird to be shot sitting or flying; but it is not the same thing to the man who shoots the bird; and little as Coresco cared about prolonging Mr. Power's life, he felt that he would be guilty of nothing less than murder if he slew one who was so completely at his mercy. Half vexed, half inclined to laugh, he contemplated his opponent's fantastic gambols and awaited his opportunity. He would give the fellow a prick in the arm and let him go, he thought; the whole thing was an absurd farce, and he regretted having brought it about.

But, alas! victory does not always declare herself for the strong or the scientific; improbabilities are continually happening, and combats have been won against overwhelming odds again and again since David laid the champion of the Philistines low with a pebble. These things have to be accounted for in some way, and when the strong man is beaten by the feeble one, we are generally told that the former has courted misadventure by despising his enemy. It may be that Coresco fell into this fatal error, or again it may be that he was really confused by a method of attack which resembled nothing that he had ever seen or heard of before. In any case, it came to pass that, hastily parrying a wild lunge of Mr. Power's, he caught the point of the Englishman's weapon on the inside of his hand, which was instantly transfixed by it.

This perforce put an end to the encounter, since Coresco could now no longer hold a sword. While the doctor was bandaging his wound for him, the Englishman came up and blurted out, rather awkwardly, 'I hope I haven't hurt you much.'

Coresco, always urbane and self-possessed, yet with a slight cloud upon his brow, bowed and replied, 'It is a nothing;' and so the foes parted.

That evening there walked into a well-known Parisian club a gloomy personage, with his arm in a sling, whose entrance gave the signal for a general outburst of amiable raillery. 'Heaven be praised! our Coresco is restored to us, alive, though wounded. Is it permitted to expose oneself to such dangers on the eve of one's marriage?'—'Tell me, my dear friend, must we go to the Hôtel de Ville or to the Protestant temple to see the last of you?'—'Ah, he is sly, that old Coresco! He discovers that in England there is no love without marriage; but he does not let himself be disconcerted by such a trifle. He gets somebody to fight with him; he receives an unfortunate wound; and, "*Mademoiselle*," says he, "unhappily, for the moment, I have no hand to offer you; be contented with the knowledge that you possess my heart."

Why had Coresco, who knew very well that his seconds were not the men to keep so good a joke as his eccentric duel secret, laid himself open to these impertinences? For the simple reason that he could not show himself at the Hôtel du Louvre in his maimed state without entering into explanations, and that it was perfectly impossible for him to sit at home, doing nothing. After all, he was not easily put out of countenance, and two hands are not required in order to play *baccarat*. He gave himself leave to break through his recently formed resolution for that once. Even if Miss Daisy could know how he was employed, she would acknowledge that, under the circumstances, he had no alternative.

Baccarat, though it had lost its old charm for him, was all very well as a means of whiling the night away; but what was to be done with the long hours of daylight?

This was what Coresco asked himself ruefully on the morrow, and so unable was he to solve the problem that towards five o'clock he gave it up in despair and had himself driven to the Hôtel du Louvre. He was not sure that it was in the best possible taste to appear in his disabled condition before the lady for whose sake he had allowed himself to be disabled; but there really seemed to be no help for it. He must carry his arm in a

slung for the next ten days at least, and in less than ten days Miss Wilton would have left Paris.

He thought himself fortunate when he found the object of his respectful devotion alone; but his satisfaction was short-lived.

'Prince Coresco,' she exclaimed, starting up with flashing eyes as he entered, 'I hope—I do hope that you are ashamed of yourself! You, who, of course, like all foreigners, are an accomplished swordsman, to pick a quarrel with my poor cousin, who had done nothing to offend you, when you must have known perfectly well that Englishmen never fight duels! It was very wrong of him to accept your challenge; but he says that he could not submit to be called a coward, and I suppose no man would. And you pretended to be our friend!'

'But, mademoiselle,' pleaded the astonished Coresco, 'since Mr. Power has thought fit to take the unheard-of course of informing you that he crossed swords with me yesterday——'

'He did no such thing!' interrupted Miss Wilton indignantly. 'It was the hotel porter who told our maid what had become of you both; and you may imagine what an afternoon we spent!'

'I regret it infinitely, and I shall have two words to say to the porter, who must be quite unfit for his situation. But I was about to remark that, since you are aware that a duel has occurred, you must also be aware that your cousin has known very well how to defend himself.'

'That only shows that Providence protected him; it does not prove that you had any wish to spare his life. For Jack there was some excuse—more than one excuse, indeed; but I cannot see that there was the least excuse in the world for you. What possible reason could you have for fighting my cousin?'

'Ah, mademoiselle!—do you not know?' exclaimed Coresco. 'Have you not understood that I love you? Pardon me that I so far disregard the proprieties as to speak to you in this way. I should, I am aware, have addressed myself in the first instance to your honoured mamma; but I cannot endure to see you angry with me. Pardon me, also I pray you, my unfortunate affair with your cousin. I was, no doubt, in the wrong; I ought to have remembered that he was of the family; but I saw in him only a *prétendant* who was annoying to you, and——'

'Oh, but indeed no!' interrupted Miss Wilton; 'he was not annoying at all.' She paused, and then, with a considerable access of colour, added: 'Perhaps I had better tell you at once that I am engaged to be married to him.'

Poor Coreesco fell somewhat heavily from the clouds. But he did not, even in this moment of cruel disenchantment, lose his sense of what was correct.

'In that case, mademoiselle,' said he, with a low bow, 'it only remains for me to offer you my sincere felicitations and retire.'

But perhaps his face was more eloquent than his tongue, or it may be that Miss Wilton, being herself in love, was quick at detecting symptoms of a genuine case of that malady in another. She stepped hastily forward and intercepted him as he was making for the door.

'I am very sorry,' she said simply; 'I didn't know—I never supposed——' She held out her hand to him, looking at him with soft, pitying eyes.

'Dear Miss Daisy,' answered Coreesco, 'it is I who have been unpardonably stupid, and you have nothing to be sorry for. As for me, I shall be glad all my life that I have known you. I shall never marry, and I shall never cease to love you. You will not mind my saying that, as it is so very unlikely that we shall meet again.'

'But I hope we shall often meet again, and I don't at all like you to say such things,' protested the girl. 'It would be dreadful if it were true; but how can it be true? In one short week——'

'One short week, mademoiselle, may easily count for more than ten years. During ten years it has never happened to me to fall in love; I thought even that I was not capable of love; but in a week you have shown me my mistake. I do not complain; it is not to everybody that a week of happiness is accorded.'

The rejoinder which Miss Wilton was beginning to make to this somewhat lackadaisical speech was nipped in the bud by the abrupt entrance of her mother, who, taking in the situation at a glance, groaned aloud. 'Oh, Daisy, you foolish, foolish girl!' she exclaimed.

Miss Daisy promptly turned and fled—which was, perhaps, the very best thing that she could have done—and Mrs. Wilton, relieved of a presence which might have been a little disconcerting, plumped down into the nearest arm-chair and groaned again.

'All your fault!' was her first intelligible ejaculation. 'You had my best wishes, I'm sure—and, really, I thought she had got over that silly infatuation about Jack. And everything seemed to be going so smoothly! But then you must needs go and spoil it all by fighting a duel with a man whom you ought never to have noticed. It would have been so easy to leave him alone! All yester-

day afternoon we were expecting to see his lifeless body carried in upon a shutter, and I need hardly say that, when he made his appearance, safe and sound, Daisy simply hurled herself into his arms. Well, not literally perhaps, but it comes to the same thing. Thanks to you, they had a full explanation in the course of the evening, and he convinced her that he had been true to her during their separation—which she seems to have doubted.'

'But, madam,' said Coresco, a little puzzled, 'if you disapprove of this marriage, surely you, as Miss Wilton's mother——'

'Not a bit of it!' broke in the old lady. 'In England we can't prevent our daughters from marrying as they please, unless they choose a man who is positively disreputable or impossibly poor—and not always then. When Jack first proposed he was very badly off; but he has obtained an increase of salary since, and Daisy has a little of her own, and—and so there is no more to be said. He is not a bad young man in his way; but—well, I wish things could have fallen out otherwise!' sighed Mrs. Wilton in conclusion, meaning, perhaps, that she would have liked her daughter to be a princess.

Coresco got away as soon as he could. He was bitterly disappointed, but he bore his disappointment with a good deal of dignity. On the following day he called to make his adieux, and having been reconciled with his successful rival, who displayed much more embarrassment upon the occasion than he did, left Paris a few hours later.

Miss Wilton, on her wedding-day, wore in her hair some magnificent diamond pins, fashioned in the shape of marguerites, which were not the gift of the bridegroom. The donor of these jewels is no longer to be met with in the gay city where he purchased them, nor has he availed himself of Mrs. Power's cordial invitation to visit her in her English home. He is at present residing on his Roumanian estates, the improvement of which by scientific agricultural methods appears to occupy all his attention. He has confided to his mother that he is a changed man, that life has become serious to him, that he recognises its duties and has ceased to care for its pleasures—that he has, in short, loved once and can never love again. He has further made known to her his unalterable purpose of remaining a bachelor all his days; but that is a bold assertion for any man to make in countries where maternal influence counts for more than it does in our own; and Princess Coresco, who is a wise woman and knows her own power, is content to smile at it silently.

Bamborough Castle.

NORTHUMBERLAND is the county of castles. The deadly feuds of the great barons on each side the Border necessitated their erection; and they are much more numerous and strong on the English than on the Scotch side of the Border—partly because the Scotch were poorer, and partly because they had natural fastnesses to retire into, which were more secure than any castles. Among the Northumbrian castles there is a special interest attached to Bamborough, owing not only to its unique position, but also to the curious contrast between its original destination and the use to which it has now happily been turned. From the antiquary's point of view it may not equal in interest the great castles of the Percys, Alnwick and Warkworth, (Bamborough itself, by the way, once belonged to the Percys), but to the student of English history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it exceeds both. Neither the grand old building at the mouth of the Coquet, with all the lovely scenery at its foot and the unrivalled interest of the hermitage in its neighbourhood, nor yet the princely edifice which dominates the little town of Alnwick, can compare in point of position with the huge mass which rises over the German Ocean at Bamborough. Slains Castle, the seat of the Earls of Errol in Aberdeenshire, may challenge comparison in this respect, but it suffers from the very grandeur of its surroundings: nature divides with art the interest called forth; and as one turns from the handiwork of man to the handiwork of nature, one has to admit that the latter bears the palm. But on the comparatively tame Northumbrian coast there is nothing to distract the attention from the huge pile of masonry which almost startles one as it suddenly bursts upon the view at a turn of the road from Lucker Station; one thinks of Ehrenbreitstein, or some such mighty military fortress; and it is almost ludicrous to realise the fact that, instead of being occupied by grisly warriors, as the cannons which still frown from its port-holes would imply, its tenants are harmless little girls!

And this brings us to its history, or rather that small portion of its history with which alone this paper is concerned. We have nothing to do with King Idda and the royal borough of Bamborough, nor yet with the part which the castle played in the long Border warfare during the middle ages. Bamborough has been all but a ruin for nearly two centuries when it comes within our purview; it has been battered by the cannon in the Wars of the Roses, and has been never again restored as a fortress; but it *has* been restored to a better use, and it is to this restoration that the reader's attention is now to be turned.

In the later part of the seventeenth century, and for many generations previously, Bamborough was in the hands of the ancient family of the Forsters. All novel readers are familiar with the charming tale of 'Dorothy Forster'; but it is with another Dorothy Forster, the aunt of Mr. Besant's heroine, that our story begins. The portraits of both aunt and niece are to be seen in the court-room of the keep of the castle; and, though both are beautiful, it must be said, with all due deference to Mr. Besant, that the aunt is by far the more beautiful of the two. Perhaps this may be partly owing to the more becoming style of the dress, and especially of the headdress, of the elder; at any rate, there she looks down upon us, an exquisitely lovely creature, by no means eclipsed by the charms of her niece. It is indirectly owing to the beauty of this elder Dorothy Forster that Bamborough Castle has become, instead of a military fortress, with traces only of bloodshed and barbarism, the centre of a noble beneficence.

All Oxford men are, or ought to be, familiar with the name of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe. They have listened, or pretended to listen, to the Creweian oration; and, by the way, there is an historical and poetical fitness in the fact that that oration is now delivered by a successor of Lord Crewe in the rectorship of Lincoln College, and delivered so splendidly as to make Lord Crewe, one would think, turn in his grave; every one, too, has heard of the Crewe scholarships (in the old old days, *ehu, fugaces!* exhibitions) at Lincoln College. The students of English Church History know well the name of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham, and have, doubtless, learnt to associate with that name more than one ugly story. These stories it is not intended now to repeat. One who has himself profited by the benefactions of Lincoln College should be the last person in the world to throw a stone at one of its most liberal benefactors. But if it *did* come within the

scope of this article to narrate the history of Lord Crewe, I should think twice, yea thrice, before repeating as history the anecdotes which are current about him. For those who have penetrated beneath the surface of history know full well on what slender evidence such stories are apt to rest. A story against a clergyman, especially when that clergyman is a bishop, more especially still when that bishop is an unpopular bishop, and most of all when that unpopularity arose from the bishop being clearly in the wrong, is sure to be only too greedily swallowed. All these conditions were fulfilled in the case of Lord Crewe. He was a clergyman, a bishop, an unpopular bishop, and his unpopularity arose from enforcing, or trying to enforce, the publication of King James the Second's illegal declaration of indulgence in the Diocese of Durham. What wonder that any story that might be invented against him would be accepted as gospel? One knows how such stories arise. This is a very common way. Some purveyor of gossip records in his private journal, or writes to a confidential friend: 'Tis said that the Bishop of Brentford hath married his grandmother.' The journal or the letters get published in after-times. Then in the next version of the story the "'Tis said" is omitted, and it is stated as a grave historical fact: 'The Bishop of Brentford married his grandmother.' Then comes the popular historian—very superior person this, research almost unfathomable in its profundity, style almost dazzling in its brilliancy: 'It is with deep regret that we have to record'—he enjoys recording it beyond measure—'that this venerable prelate entered into connubial relations which violated the very first prohibition in the table of degrees of affinity of his own Church.' Then we pass, by an easy and rapid process, from the particular to the general: 'Such were the corruptions of the Church in this period that it was the common custom for bishops to marry their grandmothers.' The ardent Church reformer takes up the cry, and waxes eloquent upon it: 'In an age when bishops married their grandmothers, &c.'; and finally the literary chiffonnier rakes up the old story, puts it into the heap of garbage with which he fills his 'memoirs,' or his 'annals,' or his 'anecdotes' (why not call them 'scandals' at once?), turns it over on all sides, gloats over it, and uses it to point his unsavoury moral and adorn his nasty tale. This is the way in which history is written. The peculiar domestic relations of the episcopate which are here used as an illustration are, of course, imaginary; but any one who has studied closely the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

could point to stories almost as ridiculous, which may be traced back ultimately to the thoughtless but rather malicious gossip of a Pepys, or a Horace Walpole, or a Hervey, or a Sundon.

Now there really is no reason to invent theories to account for the preferment of Lord Crewe. He did not advance *per saltum*, but step by step; for it is but a step from the headship of a college (he was Rector of Lincoln College) and a poor bishopric (Oxford) to a rich bishopric (Durham), and neither in that, nor in any age, nor in any profession, would his nobility be, to say the least of it, any bar to his advancement. At the same time the object of this article is not to whitewash Bishop Crewe. Let us freely admit that he was not precisely the same type of man as those predecessors of his, of whom he would be reminded as he looked down on the right hand and on the left from the heights of Bamborough. Looking down to the right, he would see the Farne Islands clustering in the ocean, on one of which S. Cuthbert lived for nine years, 'on the naked and iron-like rock swept by wild winds, amid the hoarse roar of waves and the clangour of gulls and puffins, that he might the more effectually contend with the invisible adversary by prayer and fasting.' Then he 'built first a cell for himself, then, with the help of other monks, a small monastery and church, digged a well, as there was no fresh water there, and digged and ploughed the land.' This was not precisely the kind of life that Bishop Crewe appears to have led. There was a difference between the seventh and the seventeenth centuries. His cell was the episcopal palace, and his wells were dug and his lands were ploughed for him. Neither was it at all necessary for King Charles or King James to come and kneel at his feet,¹ as their predecessor, King Egfrid, had come and 'knelt at S. Cuthbert's feet, and besought him in the name of God to accept the episcopal office.' Lord Crewe was quite ready to accept the burden without any such royal condescension. Looking, on the other hand, to the left, he would have seen Holy Island, once tenanted by S. Aidan, the apostle of the Northumbrians, who would 'wander about on foot and go into the houses of the faithful to sow the seeds of God's Word in their hearts, according to the capacity of each.' There is no record of Bishop Crewe wandering about on foot for any such purpose; it was not the custom of the Bishops of Durham in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In one respect Bishop Crewe was singularly unlike his prede-

¹ He was appointed by Charles II. Bishop of Oxford, by James II. Bishop of Durham.

cessor, S. Cuthbert. It is said that the latter had such a horror of the other sex that he would not even have a cow upon his island (House Island), 'for,' he argued, 'where there is a cow there must be a woman, and where there is a woman there must be mischief.' Bishop Crewe was by no means so ungallant. On the contrary, he seems to have been peculiarly susceptible to female charms. The beauty of the fair Dorothy, daughter of Sir William Forster, the then owner of Bamborough, touched his tender heart. His suit was rejected; but he consoled himself, and married Penelope, the widow of Sir Hugh Tynne, in 1691. In 1700 his wife died, and, being off with his new love, he was on again with the old. Having lost his Penelope, he returned to his Dorothy. And this time his suit prospered. Dorothy Forster became Lady Crewe; and, though many years her husband's junior, proved a most faithful, beloved, and loving wife, till she died in the fatal year 1715, which was the ruin of the Forsters. She was buried at Stene, in Northants, the ancestral home of the Crewes, and the old man, who survived her, is said to have spent many hours at her grave, and to have mourned bitterly for the loss of his wife, who must have been a most fascinating as well as a most lovely woman. He showed his appreciation of her, also, in a more substantial way. All the Forster estates, including the ruined castle of Bamborough, would have gone to the hammer, had not Bishop Crewe come to the rescue and expended 20,000*l.* on the purchase. In 1722 the Bishop died, leaving, besides his benefactions to Oxford, the noble income of nearly 10,000*l.* a year (present value) to be disposed of as his trustees thought fit. Here we may part with Lord Crewe, but surely not without a tribute of gratitude for his bequests, which were worthy of a magnificent prince-bishop. Granting that he was too subservient to King James, yet surely he was bound to that unfortunate monarch, whose marriage with Mary of Modena he had celebrated, whose children he had baptized, and to whom he was indebted for the rich bishopric of Durham, by no common ties. He owed his all to the Stuarts; let us not be too hard upon him if he loved them not wisely but too well. Indeed, it would have been more graceful if he had showed his attachment to them by a still further step, and, following the example of his dean, Dr. Dennis Granville, had resigned his bishopric rather than take the oaths to William and Mary; but let that pass. Among the many other merits of the novel 'Dorothy Forster' not the least is that it brings into prominence the good side of Lord Crewe's character.

Let us now turn to another benefactor of Bamborough, who crowned the work which the bishop had begun. John Sharp is not exactly the sort of name which one associates with a grand old baronial—once a royal—castle: Brian de Bois-Gilbert, Walter de Lacy, or, at least, Earl Percy would be more in keeping. Nevertheless the homely name of John Sharp was an honoured name in the north during the early part of the eighteenth century. It was then borne by one of the most worthy and popular prelates who ever graced the archiepiscopal throne of York. The son and biographer of this excellent man, Thomas Sharp, Archdeacon of Northumberland and Prebendary of Durham, was appointed one of the trustees of Lord Crewe's Charity in 1737, and continued to be so until his death in 1756. His son, John Sharp the second, succeeded his father in the archdeaconry of Northumberland, the prebend of Durham, and the trusteeship of Lord Crewe's charity, and he was also perpetual curate of Bamborough until his death in 1792. It is this John Sharp who is the hero of our story. Homely worth and plain common sense are the virtues which strike one most in connection with John Sharp the first; but, in the grand conception which John Sharp the second formed and carried out, there is a touch of poetry, of genius, perhaps also of unconscious humour. His epitaph tells us that 'after rendering the ruins of Bamborough Castle habitable, he first established there a free school and dispensary, and also formed a permanent arrangement for the preservation of the lives and relief of the distresses of shipwrecked mariners.' This is a very modest description of the noble work which John Sharp did, and requires and deserves to be amplified. In point of fact, he carried out at his own expense all the repairs of the principal buildings of Bamborough Castle, and bequeathed a sum of money for the maintenance of the fabric, so that the ample funds devised by Lord Crewe might be left intact. He founded the library in the castle, in which are many of the standard works of his day; he collected the tapestry which adorns the walls, and also the very interesting portraits; so that it is to him that we are indebted for the lovely pictures of the two Dorothy Forsters, for that of Lord Crewe himself, a man of striking appearance, with marked features, prominent nose, in his own black hair, not in the huge wig of the period. There are portraits also of Archbishop Sharp and his son Archdeacon Thomas Sharp, and engravings of Archbishops Dolben and Drummond and Bishop Van Mildert—the two latter added, of course, after Archdeacon John Sharp's death; and last, but not least,

there is Archdeacon John Sharp himself, an old-fashioned English divine, every inch of him, appropriately represented in the act of relieving a shipwrecked mariner. Only those who have studied the ecclesiastical history of the eighteenth century can appreciate the pleasure of gazing upon the features of these good men, with whose writings they have long been perfectly familiar. Lord Crewe's funds, thus relieved by Archdeacon Sharp of any expenses connected with the fabric, were to be devoted annually by the trustees to the rebuilding of churches, the augmentation of poor livings, the support of schools, and the maintenance of charities at Bamborough itself. A surgery and dispensary were to be maintained for the poor at the castle; and—here comes in that touch of poetry and humour of which I spoke—the castle itself was to be manned—if one may be pardoned the contradiction—by a regiment of little girls, thirty in number (there are now, I understand, thirty-two), who are to be selected by the trustees, brought up and instructed within the castle walls, and afterwards provided with an outfit and placed in service. The result is odd, but very touching. Instead of the measured tramp of the sentinel, which one would expect to hear as one approaches the great military fortress, the first sound that meets the ear—at least the first that met *my* ear—was the voice of a highly respectable old lady who keeps the lodge, and apparently acts the sentinel's part. Instead of the upright form and bright uniform of the British soldiers whom one would expect to find the denizens of the stronghold, one sees little girls running about in their neat uniforms of a subfusc hue; at every step one is reminded of peace, not of war, of helpless childhood, not of stalwart manhood, of Christian charity, not of unchristian bloodshed.

But we have not yet done with good Archdeacon Sharp. He seems to have represented the good side of the characters of the eighteenth-century clergy. They are charged, and doubtless there is some truth in the charge, with having been too much secularised; but when they turned their interest in secular matters to the good account that Archdeacon Sharp did, they effected more good than they would have been able to do if they had held aloof from them. The archdeacon, as became the incumbent of a sea-board parish, took the deepest interest in sailors' affairs; among other proofs of this, it may be mentioned that he was a steady patron of Lukin, the inventor of the life-boat. All that part of the charities of Bamborough which is connected with the sea is exclusively due to the archdeacon, not

to the bishop at all. All who are shipwrecked on the coast are to be provided with food and lodging, and means of returning to their homes. Drowned sailors are to be buried at the expense of the charity; a lifeboat is to be maintained, and premiums to be given to those most forward to render assistance in cases of peril;—and all this is to be paid for out of moneys devised by Archdeacon Sharp.

Well may the name of John Sharp be an honoured name at Bamborough! Well may the relics of him be carefully preserved there! Here again we meet with one of those delightful incongruities which constitute one of the chief charms of the place. Whereas in other castles you are shown the cuirasses, and the coat of mail, and the brand *excalibur*, which were worn or wielded by the warrior heroes whose deeds of prowess rendered the place famous, at Bamborough you are shown the Archdeacon's sedan-chair in which this peaceful hero was borne about on his mission of mercy.

The interest of Bamborough is by no means confined to the castle. There is the old Manor House, with which the readers of 'Dorothy Forster' are more familiar than with the castle itself. There is the lighthouse on the Farne Islands, immortalised by the heroic Grace Darling, whose noble courage and modesty might have led even S. Cuthbert to make an exception to his rule that where there is a woman there must be mischief. There is the fine old cruciform church, which would be an imposing building were it not dwarfed by the proximity of its gigantic neighbour on the hill. There are all sorts of interesting monuments, both in the church and the churchyard, such as a sleeping figure of Grace Darling on a graceful canopied tomb—a really beautiful work of art; the tomb of that heroic minister, who, when the *Pegasus* went down, having struck on the Goldstone rock, in 1843, assembled the drowning crew on deck, and led the prayers with an unflinching voice until that voice was drowned by the rush in of the waves; monuments to the Sharp family (other members of which, besides those mentioned above, have been connected with Bamborough) by Chantry; several monuments to the Forster family, with a description of some of which this sketch may fairly conclude. One was erected by Dorothy Forster—not Mr. Besant's, but our Dorothy, Lady Crewe, daughter of Sir William Forster, 'to the memory of her dear brothers, William John and Ferdinand, as the last respect that can be paid them for their true affection to the Church, the monarchy, their

country, and their sister.' Another is to the memory of that unfortunate General Forster—the Tom Forster of the novel—whose incompetency was one of the causes of the disaster which befell the abortive Jacobite rising in 1715. There are two dates on this tomb, 1715 and 1736, the second referring to the time of his real burial, the first to a false burial, when his sister Dorothy, to whose heroic efforts he owed his escape from the Tower, gave out his death to secure his safety; and finally, there is the tomb of Dorothy Forster the younger herself, who did not survive her brother very long, and who, after spending her last days in retirement at Bamborough Manor House, was buried in the church at which she had long been a devout worshipper.

As this is intended to be purely an historical sketch, nothing has been said about the recent disputes concerning the management of the Bamborough charities. These disputes are, I believe, now settled. Let us trust that the noble intentions of the bishop and the archdeacon may ever be faithfully carried out in the spirit, even if change of times requires some alteration in the letter. There are many other ancient castles in England, now standing magnificent even in their ruins, which might be transmuted, without any detriment to their antiquarian interest, from monuments of bygone feuds into centres of Christian beneficence. But where are the Crewes and the Sharps who will do it?

J. H. OVERTON.

In an English Deer Park.

FAR down in the ancient kingdom of Gwent, where trout-streams from the neighbouring Black Mountains murmur through valleys filled with white-faced Herefords, one hill rises higher than most of its brethren. An old historic mansion lies at the foot of it, while lawns open upwards towards a wood of grand oaks, an irregular fringe being on its outskirts pierced here and there with glades, or dotted with occasional elms and cedars. Enormous beds of bracken five or six feet high lie in shade or sunshine. Acres of hawthorns, gnarled and blown asunder by the winds of a couple of centuries, succeed as the country cover ascends higher. Then occurs a marshy spot or two with alders and birches. Yews of great bulk with masses of funereal foliage hem it in; then copse-wood, where primroses and blue-bells run riot in spring; and finally a belt of Scotch firs marks off the chase proper from the blocks of grey stone and muffling masses of fern which form the conspicuous scalp of this hill. The views from its summit are splendid. The Malvern Hills loom through mist in the east; towards the opposite direction the Sugar Loaf and the Holy Mountain, near Abergavenny, stand as sentinels before a host of Welsh hills. Hereford and Credenhill, with its old Roman entrenchments, are visible to the north, while the smoke of steamers and distant lines of grey and green betoken the Bristol Channel and the fair combes below the Quantocks in Somerset. The loveliness of the surrounding country adds much to the impressive character of the prospect.

This hillside forms a deer park, and the large-eared timid hinds are watching us, doubtful whether to slip off to their lords hiding in the next thicket; and now, reassured by our pacific mien, they browse on, still keeping one eye, however, upon our movements. Civilisation has brought the fallow deer much nearer man, but the suspicious looks of ancient freedom, before their ancestors were enclosed in the chase, never leave them. It is the same with the wood-pigeon and many other creatures—they

never become quite tame. Few people besides the woodmen and keepers approach these deer; dogs are not allowed in the park; there are few or no boys to take nests. The consequence is that the place becomes a preserve for many of our rarer creatures—an asylum, in short, where all save hawks and owls may find peace. The squirrel plays hide-and-seek in the hazels by our side; the mocking laugh of the green woodpecker, or 'yokkal' as it is here called, floats to the ears; high up in the old elm the larger spotted woodpecker drums at times, at others hammers the old wood with such diligence that the air resounds. During the summer of 1885 a kite was seen hovering over the park, and, like the bison in North America, the kite is year by year gradually approaching extinction in England. Goldfinches feed on the tall thistles near the boundary fence, and sing as they alight. Overhead the nuthatch with ruddy breast and ash-coloured back brings its pickaxe-like bill down upon the boughs, and the sound rings through the whole grove. Until the last six or eight years the raven built in a Scotch fir high up on the hillside. The keeper, being a keeper, and having no special orders to spare the birds, shot them, and the park at once lost one of its chief attractions. An ornithologist recently offered in the local papers half a crown to any keeper or man who could point out the nest of the raven in a tree in the county. Not one was to be found in Herefordshire.

Few English parks are wild enough and sufficiently extensive to admit of red deer being confined in them. We have heard them 'belling' through the morning mists at Bolton Abbey, and west-country hunters well know the 'warrantable stags' of Exmoor. The vast tracts which extend over the lonely Scotch mountains are the proper home of the red deer in Great Britain, and there, inasmuch as these forests cannot carry sheep during the winter, they are likely long to flourish, in spite of sentimental tourists and political economists, too often entirely ignorant of rural economy. Few sights can be imagined more in keeping with the *genius loci* of loch and mountain in the North than a string of deer, led by a stag with royal antlers, slowly winding its way up some rocky pass, particularly if an eagle (now, thanks to the Duke of Sutherland, a much commoner sight than of yore) be descried at the same time sailing over the crags. Similarly, the pretty little roedeer does not flourish in a confined park. It prefers low shrubs and wooded glens, where it can ramble at its will. In a park its ravages among young trees are very serious. More than once of late years, notably in Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson's

park at Charlton, and in Orkney and Northumberland, it has been attempted to domesticate the reindeer. Either the confinement or the climate, however, always proved fatal to the experiment. And yet reindeer are known to have abounded in England after the glacial epoch, while a passage which has been cited from the 'Orkneyinga Saga' tells that so late as the twelfth century the Jarls of Orkney were in the habit of crossing over to Caithness almost every summer, and there hunting on the wild moors the red and the rein deer.

As these reflections pass through the mind, eight or ten of the dark variety of fallow deer move slowly and majestically through the fern, startling a pheasant on their way. Certainly the Roman invaders must have admired the poetry of motion when they brought this species of deer from the Mediterranean provinces to our island, and the beauty of changeable tints of green and yellow when they imported the pheasant and peacock. How much our parks and pleasure-grounds owe to Roman enterprise may be better estimated if it be remembered also that this cloud of white-tailed rabbits, which jauntily darts up hill at our approach, is another gift of the whilom mistress of the world. Add the elm, that magnificent park tree, and our indebtedness becomes manifest. The oak, alder, birch, and yew are our chief indigenous trees, and of them the copses and forests which covered the hills of Gwent in the Roman period must largely have consisted. Indeed, these trees preponderate largely in South Herefordshire at present, patriarchal yews frequently pleasing the tree-lover's eye as they lean out of an old hedgerow or flourish on the high bank's side overhanging some river. It is easy in such a district to obtain a mental view of what the landscape must have been before hedgerows and square arable fields and symmetrically planted trees altered its face. The larger features of hill and river remain as they were in the dawn of historical time, although man's power has been busy around them. Here are

trees and rivulets, whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss, that clothes the hawthorn root.¹

During summer and fine weather the deer share the sylvan shades and sunny lawns of the park with rabbits. In winter the grass is poor and eaten away, and they are often put to great

¹ Cowper, *Winter Walk at Noon*.

straits for food. We have then known them descend to a keeper's cottage and eat potato peelings which his wife had charitably thrown out of doors. They are fed at such times with hay, but only a few seem to learn that this may be expected daily. The bulk of them stay sheltering under the trees. Horse chestnuts should always be planted in deer parks. In autumn it is a pretty sight to watch the sleek creatures assembled under their shade, eagerly waiting for the prickly husks to fall, when they are immediately pounced upon, the husks knocked off with the animals' hoof, and the kernel eagerly eaten. Deer are greatly creatures of habit. At about the same time every summer afternoon they leave the high bracken and the oaks and come forth on to the lawns, appearing always to choose the same spots for feeding and sleep. Those who observe them closely can tell also an approaching change of weather from their bearing and the localities which they seek at such times. Doubtless if we were to spend as much observation on cattle or sheep, the same restlessness before impending rain would be noticed. Indeed, the 'Shepherd of Banbury' in his weather wisdom does draw homely weather prognostications from the habits and looks of his woolly charge.

As a general rule the antlers of park deer are very fine, and gradually deteriorate, partly owing to the confined space in which the animals live, but more especially owing to the lack of fresh blood. Some proprietors are careful to supply this, but too often it is neglected because it entails a little expense and a good deal of trouble. Mr. Boyd Dawkins remarks that the development of antlers in deer from the Lower Miocene strata, when no member of the family possessed antlers, to the Pleiocenes, when the *cervus dicranios* owned the most complicated antlers known either among living or fossil deer, is analogous to the yearly development of tines in our deer at present.¹ Until a stag has reached its perfection, a tine a year is added to its antlers. After that time its weapons become feebler and smaller. The cast horns are frequently found among the moss or fern where they have dropped, but the animal often gnaws them instinctively to obtain substance for the next set. The fallow deer rarely if ever attacks any one, differing thereby from the red deer, which, in the rutting season, will at times set upon a stranger without hesitation. St. John even gives an instance of a tame roedeer killing a boy. The fawns are born in June after a gestation of eight months. But some do not appear till July or even the beginning of August, and it is noticed that a cold winter speedily

¹ *Early Man in Britain*, p. 88.

tells on these more tender little ones. The first fawn that we remarked in 1855 was born in the second week of June. Few sights are more beautiful than the fawns tripping over some sunlit lawn between the oaks, like so many lambs, while their mothers, though equally graceful, often with matronly pride forbear to join in such young and foolish pranks. The bucks never indulge in them.

Twenty years ago the late Mr. P. Evelyn Shirley published some interesting statistics about deer and deer parks. There are, it seems, 334 parks still stocked with deer to be found in the different counties of England. In thirty-one of these red deer are kept. The oldest park is Eridge, in Sussex, while the largest is Windsor, which contains 2,600 acres; Lord Egerton of Tatton's, at Tatton, Cheshire, is the next in size, with 2,500 acres. Fallow deer are supposed never to exceed twenty years in age; red deer will live to thirty-five or forty years. Of the thirty-four parks mentioned in 'Domesday' eight belonged to the king. The deer in these were captured by being driven into *haia* or enclosures—our hedges. At one time the Archbishop of Canterbury had more than twenty parks or chases attached to his see. Probably Archbishop Abbot (1621), who had the misfortune to kill a keeper with his crossbow while hunting, and who grieved over this calamity to the end of his life, was one of the latest archbishops to indulge in this sport. A *saltatorium*, or deer-leap—i.e. a pitfall in which to take deer—was sometimes granted from the Crown to a subject. Deer must have plenty of shelter in a park, and there should not be much boggy ground in their domain. They should be six years old before they are killed. A good fallow buck will weigh from 100 to 120 lbs. when prepared as venison. Parks will not carry more than one deer to the acre, and even a less proportion is found necessary if sheep be kept with them. Beans furnish excellent food for deer. The mistletoe is said to produce abortion, but in the park before us all the low hawthorns are hung with it, and it seems perfectly innocuous. About 11 A.M. it may be noticed that fallow deer frequently leave off feeding and lie down till about 5 P.M. in the summer. Before rain the does and fawns are unusually active.¹

Virgil has a beautiful hunting piece of the happy Hyperboreans running down deer and slaughtering them in the snow. We have often thought how admirably it would have suited the brush of Sir E. Landseer or Ansdell. The characteristic hunting term for the braying of deer in the autumn is preserved in 'Marmion,'

¹ *Some Account of English Deer Parks.* 1867. Murray.

where 'the wild deer *bells* from bush and brake.' This 'belling' (*i.e.* bellowing) can be heard at a great distance in the stillness of night. Harsh though it be, it harmonises with the gloom and silence of the hills. Even the fallow deer in our park are heard belling for a couple of miles on a still September night.

The Romans must have been familiarly acquainted with the fallow deer, and any one writing on it could have ascertained particulars at once. But the last thing an ancient naturalist thought of was to consult nature. It is worth while collecting some of Pliny's beliefs to show how old wives' fables and what we should now term folk-lore satisfied even the most learned and painstaking of the Roman naturalists. Their recital will show what natural history owes to Lord Bacon. The extracts are taken from the quaint translation of Dr. Philemon Holland (London, 1634): 'It is generally held or confessed that the Stag or hind liues long; for an hundred yeres after Alexander the great, some were taken with golden collars about their necks, ouergrowne now with haire and growne within the skin; which collars the said king had done upon them. This creature of all diseases is not subject to the feuer, but he is good to cure it. I haue known great ladies and dames of state use euery morning to eat the venison of red Deere, and thereby to haue liued a great age and neuer had the ague. It is thought this is a certain remedy and neuer faileth, in case the stag be stricken starke dead at once with one wound and no more. Stags (by report) haue within their heads twentie little wormes, to wit, in the concavity under their tongue and about that jointure where the head is grafted to the chin-bone. About Briletum the Deer haue foure kidnies apeece. Let a man lay under him stags' skins in stead of a mattrance, he shall sleep securely, without any feare that serpents will approach. Not only whiles they be aliue do stags war against serpents with the breath of their nostrils, but also when they be dead euery member and piece of their body is contrary unto them. Burn a piece of an Hart's horne, you shall see how the smoke and smell thereof will chase away serpents. Whosoeuer haue about them so much as the tooth of an Hart, or be anointed with the marrow or suet of a Stag Buck or Hind-calfe, need not to fear any serpents, for they will flie from them.'¹ And much more to the same purpose, no marvel coming amiss to the old naturalist. Harts' horns are still used in modern chemistry, it may be noted, in the production of ammonia, and ammonia is an excellent remedy for snake-bites.

¹ Vol. i. pp. 314, 333, 343; vol. ii. p. 321.

After Pliny the stag was not celebrated in any literary work which acquired wide popularity until the treatise of Dame Juliana Berners on hunting, bound up in what is known as 'The Boke of St. Alban's.' All the mediæval lore of venerie may here be found, the terms of the hunter for the deer during each year of its life, how 'to know the hede of an hert,' 'how ye shall breeke an hert' (disjoint and carve a hart), with much more to the same effect. It is curious to think that all this cumbrous vocabulary has almost wholly disappeared. A few terms linger in modern hunting *argot*, a few more exist in Shakespeare's pages, and will continue to exist, thanks to his genius; but the nice rules of the mediæval huntsman have all fled with the rise of a middle class in England and the fading of the sharp line of demarcation between the old noble who might hunt and the clown who might not participate in sylvan sport. 'Harbourers' and 'tufters' are still spoken of in Exmoor, and 'warrantable deer' possess still their 'rights' and 'points,' still 'take soil' and 'run to herd'; but these terms are only familiar to those who have hunted with the Exmoor stag-hounds.

Needless to say, no hounds ever chase the fallow deer in our parks. They might be sacred to Diana, so far as that is concerned. If any enterprising dog were inclined to enter the precincts, and could only read, he would see written in large letters on a board a notice denouncing death to all such intruders. The rifle, or sometimes even the shot-gun, kills deer much more expeditiously, and at much less risk of frightening the herd, than does any kind of running them down with dogs. The venison of fallow deer, though sweet and tender, is not to be compared with the red deer, and, as a rule, the former deer are not much shot in our parks, save in order to keep down the numbers of the herd. They are beautiful appliances of wealth and ancient lineage rather than cattle from which profit is expected, surrounding the

Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state,

and lending a grace of their own to the peaceful precincts of a great house. Doubtless the Duke's sentiments still weigh with their owners—

Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools
Being native burghers of this desert city,
Should in their own confines, with forked heads,
Have their round haunches gored.

It pleased Sydney Smith, when old friends visited his parsonage, to satirise the foibles of ancestral wealth in a kindly fashion by sending his man to sit with wig and gown and maple bowl in a grotto like a hermit, and his boy to hold up a stuffed deer's head and antlers from a thicket.

The long summer day is waning at last as we ramble through the tall bracken, and the shadows of the great oaks lengthen on the fair sloping lawns. Our thoughts are interrupted by a string of hinds following their antlered lord from the shade of the old thorn-trees to the open glades now the heat has moderated. What graceful creatures they are! How little do they care for our presence! Does not every wild creature speedily find out when it is being observed by a naturalist rather than by a designing sportsman? Mark their coats—some literally fallow (pale), others much darker, but all shining where the sun glints off them—their large lustrous eyes, the hinds' long ears diligently gathering in every sound, the proud majestic gait of the stag. He is in very deed lord of all he surveys, until some younger champion deposes him in a year or two's time from his pride of place. It is a typical picture of country life in England, a sign of the long peace with which the land has been blessed, and of the happy relations subsisting between the lord of the manor and his numerous tenantry. Low down among the trees the village spire is visible, and on the other side, half hidden in foliage, the long roofs of the great house, broken here and there with a gilt vane catching the last rays of sunlight. The church clock strikes, followed faintly by the turret clock over the stable-yard; a couple of children pass hand in hand through the park to reach their cottage, the dor-hawk drones pleasantly from the hillside, the meadow-crake begins her harsh cry for the night. It is time for us to walk home, past the old Scotch fir, by the crab-tree where once a keeper hanged himself, by the great oak and yew, near neighbours, the pride perchance of centuries. Mists creep in from all sides, the river's murmur waxes louder,

Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.

M. G. WATKINS.

A Mock Idyl.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ADMIRAL IS SQUARED.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN VILLIERS was of all landowners the most peppery. He could not keep on terms with the farmers, his tenants; he never attempted to be on terms with his relations, and his warlike attitude towards the owner of the adjacent property of Torres was notorious. A man so revelling in storms as the Admiral must needs have *some* quarrel with his next-door neighbour, and the subject-matter is easily found. A bit of land contested, a dubiousness of fence, and behold Sir John Villiers rampant. The makings of a despot had the Admiral; he was kindness itself (in his imperious way) so long as he was not crossed; but oppose the most reasonable of wills to his and England itself, let alone Devonshire, was not large enough to contain him.

Unfortunately, it was Roscoria who happened to be the next-door neighbour, and very warm the Admiral made the neighbourhood.

Roscoria loved every inch of Torres, and held his own with an iron grip. The Admiral took it into his head that a corner on the boundary of the two properties belonged to himself, and he set himself to wrest it from Roscoria. A little representation and cajolery he tried first, then threats, for he did not mean to be ousted by an impudent young puppy like Louis Roscoria. But the owner of Torres stood firm.

The relations were thus a little strained, when a glorious piece of strategy occurred to Louis the lover. He had just declared himself to Lyndis, and had received her assurance that she loved him in return, and would marry him gladly could the Admiral be squared.

So Roscoria arranged a dinner at Torres Hall, Tregurtha and two or three others to be present, and then went over himself to

invite the Admiral. Sir John Villiers hemmed and ha'd, and would have curtly declined to enter the young man's house, but, scenting the battle afar off, and hoping for a good rousing tussle, he consented grimly.

Some fine old port came up from the cellar of Torres, and a very jolly party Roscoria and Tregurtha managed to make of it. The Admiral, who came in at first snuffing haughtily and twirling his eye-glass with the most warlike aspect imaginable, was soothed and smoothed as the wine went round, and at last began to tell stories.

Propitious circumstance! Need we say how the young men roared with laughter at indifferent naval anecdotes, and greeted one effort at an august pun with clamorous applause? Tregurtha burst forth at last, followed by the others, into the Lobgesang, 'For he's a jolly good fellow!' and this was the signal for Roscoria to edge himself confidentially close to the Admiral and insinuate:—

'Indeed, sir, we are all convinced of this, and it makes me all the more regretful that there should be any—any small mis—mis—understanding.' (Roscoria here grew very nervous, and stammered a good deal.) 'Fact is, Sir John, we all think here that things could be most comfortably settled if—if you could be content to make one small sacrifice. You have a niece——'

'The sacrifice, sir, if any is made, must be on *your* side,' quoth the Admiral, kindling; 'though I don't deny that if you were to marry my niece it might thus be made to my full and complete satisfaction.'

'Precisely, Sir John; and in that case, without further difficulty, I give up to you the "boundary-plot," which, I am afraid, you have long wished to possess.'

'Wished, sir—*wished*? It is mine!' The Admiral smote the table with his fist; the glasses jingled; he remembered the port, and, drinking some, was cheered.

'Yours, Sir John—yours from this moment if you consent to lay Miss Villiers's hand in mine.' Roscoria spoke with ardour; the other men gathered round with interest, and the Admiral saw he was expected to say the handsome thing. He rebelled at first.

'Young man,' he said, 'your hospitality is of a somewhat treacherous character.'

'Pardon me, Sir John,' retorted Roscoria. 'I believe I have made you an honourable proposal. If it takes place whilst you are drinking my wine, well, sir, all that I can say is—I trust you find the port is good.'

'Excellent—excellent. I have no fault to find with the wine. The wine, sir, is unexceptionable. I wish only I found your offer the same.'

'Come now, Admiral,' interposed Tregurtha good-humouredly, 'what's a niece? You are rid of a tiresome responsibility, and the lady gets an honest husband.'

'H'm! honesty is his *forte*, is it? Shouldn't have thought it,' muttered the Admiral; but he was giving in.

'There is one objection,' he said, moving uneasily. 'Miss Villiers is under age; but then girls are headstrong nowadays. What if she declines?'

'Ah! she'll not decline,' said Roscoria, with a joyous ring in his voice.

'Indeed, sir! Then there has been a little clandestine love-affair between you already, has there? The hussy!'

'Well, Admiral, we don't generally make our first tentative advances in the presence of the guardians—now do we?' put in the ready Tregurtha.

'I suppose not, you rascal; I suppose not,' said the Admiral, and pen and paper were laid before him.

'Now mind, Sir John,' Roscoria warned him jocularly, 'this transaction may not be strictly legal; but there is such a thing as the Court of Honour. I am sure of my own intentions, I can guess at the lady's, and this writing is to hold you to yours.'

The Admiral only nodded impatiently, and wrote down in good set terms an agreement to give his niece in marriage to Louis Roscoria on condition of that landowner and his heirs for ever resigning all claim of ownership to the boundary-plot of Braceton Park. He threw the paper across to the young men to sign as witnesses, and then returned to his glass and his yarn. The old fellow's somewhat shaken good-humour was quickly restored. He was finally put into his greatcoat and sent home in his brougham, feeling vaguely uncomfortable, but softly singing a nautical ditty.

Roscoria knew no discomfort nor repentance, but danced the hornpipe with Tregurtha.

CHAPTER VII.

ROSCORIA'S BETROTHED.

ROSETTA VILLIERS was looking very uncomfortable. She had taken a seat opposite to her uncle, the Admiral, and was cross-questioning him with a certain sternness, before which the old sinner was quailing considerably.

'Mr. Roscoria made you this offer, you say? It is most extraordinary; I scarcely have seen him.'

'Why, Rosetta, he gave me to understand—at least, he hinted at something like an *affaire de cœur* between you.'

'Affaire de fiddlestick!' cried Miss Villiers, rising in real indignation; 'the man *must* have been exceeding! Why, upon my word, the conceit of these young men! I suppose, passing me in the lanes once or twice, he was slightly taken with my looks, and supposes me to have been equally entranced by his. I should really like to see him, uncle, to give him a piece of my mind.'

'Well, that is the most sensible thing you have said, Rosetta,' agreed the Admiral, 'for you must anyway see this fellow, and make it up with him somehow, to save my credit as a man of my word. I admit it's a deuced awkward business, but since I consented to it—in cold blood mind, Rosetta—I repeat that I had *not* had too much—I am bound to stick by the contract, and I suppose, you, being included in it, are at least called upon to bear me out.'

'I never knew such a fearful scrape!' cried Rosetta, with a rush of despairing tears to her eyes. And then, being very brave of nature, she shook herself together and pondered. She was a real child still, only sixteen, and had never been much in the company of older ladies. She was, therefore, quite unprepared to enter upon any matrimonial plans of her own, and—clever as she was—dwelt in surprising ignorance of the world. No course then could her inexperience suggest, except that of saving her uncle's reputation by adhering to the contract. And as she thought and accustomed herself to the strange idea, her young face lighted up with humorous smiles, and she threw up her head with a delightful sense of enterprise.

'Sir,' she began, turning solemnly upon the shamefast Admiral, 'I feel that you have treated me with scant consideration, and plunged me early into the difficulties of a matronly career. Nevertheless, such is my care for the family reputation that—I'll marry Louis Roscoria!' she concluded, with a sudden gust of laughter.

'Yes; he is learned, is he not? And I remember him as very good-looking,' she added, with a blush; 'large soft eyes, if I am not mistaken. I suppose one can fall in love, given a man so handsome. *Allons—essayons!* But if I don't give it him for this abominable deception, then I don't feel the blood of my Spanish ancestors on the mother's side coursing vigorously through my veins! Sir, I consent.'

The Admiral (who was honestly afraid of his spoilt niece) confounded himself in thanks and praise, and privately thanked also his stars that his ward had grown up so unsophisticated. With that tricky Spanish spirit of hers, had she taken this affair in a different light she might have got me into fearful trouble, he thought, softly whistling directly the descendant of the hidalgos had turned the corner.

Next day was fixed for Roscoria's introduction. On hearing the complete success of his stratagem, Louis arrayed himself regardless of expense and hastened to Braceton Park. He gave Tregurtha leave to follow him in an hour—'to be introduced to the lady who, I suppose, will then be my betrothed,' he said.

Admitted into the drawing-room, Roscoria was left alone for what seemed to him an awful while. He grew nervous, and fluttered at every sound in the room. The clock annoyed him inexpressibly, and he started every time he faced a mirror. At last, in despair, he clutched his hat and stick, and sat down in orderly stiffness with his back to the door, and tried to abstract his thoughts. But they would dwell on his Lyndis, and it was no use to try and 'sit like his grandsire carved in alabaster.'

Suddenly there was a light sound of approach, and a tremulous, sweet, rich voice close to his ear said simply:—

'Good afternoon, Mr. Roscoria.'

Louis bounded on his chair as by galvanism, dropped his encumbrances, and spread forth a pair of eager arms, into which Rosetta, thinking this was all in the day's work, was actually preparing submissively to walk, when he saw that something was wrong.

'Ten thousand pardons!' he cried.

'Not at all,' said Rosetta, smiling. 'It is quite natural that you should feel deeply upon an occasion like this.' And then she rubbed her small hands together bashfully, and waited with a beating heart for the beginning of his courtship.

'But I hope you see my mistake,' urged Louis, still in smiling embarrassment. 'I took you, in fact, for another lady.'

'But I *am* the other lady,' said Rosetta.

'Ah!—Miss Villiers I was expecting.'

'Precisely. I am Miss Villiers,' said Rosetta, with firmness.

Roscoria looked the lady in the face. She was a very young-looking creature, small, but rather strongly made, with a striking white face and great blue-black eyes with a latent, passionate fire in the very depths of them. She had a resolute small chin and a decided mouth. Louis thought her, spite of her prettiness, the most tremendous interlocutor he had ever met. He turned absolutely faint with sudden horror, and grasped a chair, saying feebly:—

'But Miss Villiers was tall and fair.'

'Oh, my cousin do you mean? Yes; she will be in directly. But—but '—(Rosetta's face grew whiter and her eyes larger with the shock of discovery)—'you did not mean *her*, surely?'

'Excuse me—I did—and do.'

'Then allow me to assure you, Mr. Roscoria, that the Admiral did *not*. My cousin, Lyndis Villiers, is his niece and guest merely; it is I who am his ward since my father died in a naval engagement. He has made a very natural mistake. Lyndis is supposed to be out of the question, being engaged to marry a former pupil of yours—Mr. Eric Rodda. The Admiral of course assumed that you meant me when you made your extraordinary request. I may mention that I thought it odd at the time.'

'O Lord! O Lord! I am punished this time!' groaned Roscoria, and, without even keeping up a pretence of ceremony, he sank on the table and sat there, rocking himself backwards and forwards. Rosetta laughed as one who had lost a load of care. She was now free to rejoice at the misfortunes of another, and for the first moment could not resist doing so. She stood opposite Roscoria and laughed at him and his discomfiture, like the child she really was.

'Not that I mean the least disrespect to you, my dear Miss Villiers,' apologised Roscoria, out of the depths of his lamentations; 'if only, like my predecessor Jacob when in a similar predicament, I could take *both*, how glad, how thankful I should be! But as it is, dear Miss Villiers, your cousin is so much to me—and—I thought I had got her!—in short, I know you will excuse me.'

'Excuse you? Why, I am so thankful myself!' breathed out Rosetta.

'Thanks; it is very kind of you to say so. It makes it much easier for me,' sighed Roscoria gratefully.

At that moment enter the Admiral, walking sideways and fumbling with the door-handle as one who fears to interrupt a *tête-à-tête*.

Roscoria came forward in penitent guise, and began to explain the unlucky mistake that had arisen, and how it was Miss *Lyndis* Villiers towards whom his heart had yearned.

The Admiral snorted. His temper arose. Both the young people knew they were in for it. Sir John Villiers withered them both with his sea-faring eye.

'Goodness gracious!' exclaimed Roscoria, also a little irritably. 'If I tear up that paper, and leave you in possession of that bit of land, and say no more of my marriage in connection with it, but try to gain Miss *Lyndis* Villiers as a separate undertaking, I suppose it will be all right?'

'Rosetta Villiers is an heiress, so if she pleases to throw herself away on a poor schoolmaster—he's no worse than the good-for-nothing military men who generally get the heiresses—but *Lyndis* Villiers has not a penny, and I owe it to my second brother's memory to see that his orphaned child does not marry any impecunious young gentleman. Besides, she is suitably affianced to Mr. Rodda's eldest son. She is, therefore, out of the question.'

'For the moment let us assume it,' said Roscoria (who, we remember, was better informed); 'but in that case, naturally, Miss Rosetta Villiers is free.'

A very gentlemanly young man! thought Rosetta approvingly.

'I do not see it, sir,' said the Admiral, unfurling a handkerchief like a challenging flag. 'I will neither give up the field nor permit you to go without your share in the bargain.'

'Then give me a trifling consideration in money,' suggested Roscoria—'if Miss Villiers will kindly pardon my entering upon such matters in her presence.'

'That piece of land and my niece are, in my estimation, priceless. Only the one, sir, is a sufficient substitute for the other. Besides, I decline to have any shilly-shallying in this affair. It will be all over the place to-morrow that Rosetta accepted you and you threw her over.'

'Let it be; I accept the position,' said Rosetta.

'I will not let it be,' stormed the Admiral. 'If a young man thinks he can play fast and loose with a niece of mine, let him try—let him try!'

Here Rosetta, growing really frightened, hastily went out and returned with sherry and biscuits, which she pressed upon Ros-

coria's acceptance in the midst of his indignant rejoinder to her uncle. Mechanically the young man received the refreshments, and, holding his glass in one hand and taking a fierce bite of biscuit, he said loudly, and turning towards the lady, 'I protest again, Sir John Villiers, that I have not the slightest intention of playing fast and loose with Miss Rosetta, and she knows it as well as I do——'

And the door opened, and Lyndis Villiers was in the midst of them.

Now this time, of course, Roscoria was unnerved, and did nothing but turn very white and set down his glass and look away. Therefore Lyndis, hearing his last speech, seeing him in excited converse with her uncle and her pretty cousin, and eating and drinking as if he were there for the day, harboured a deep suspicion of her lover. There was a painful silence.

Then the Admiral began again:—

'Lyndis, come here! Do you know Mr. Roscoria?' and Lyndis lifted her clear grey eyes upon Louis and said, 'Yes, certainly.'

Then Roscoria recovered himself and shook his beloved by the hand, and murmured, 'Good morning, dearest; I am in an awful scrape.'

And Rosetta confided to Lyndis that the Admiral was past human guidance, and it was to be hoped that Providence would interfere. Of course Lyndis knew nothing of what was toward, and a laborious explanation had to take place, at the end of which the fair, tall Englishwoman looked rather shocked, and murmured something about 'unjustifiable liberty,' which was directed at Roscoria. He took up the attack by a counter-charge:—

'Is it true that you, as the Admiral says, are still engaged to Eric Rodda?'

Lyndis raised her eyes again to Roscoria's, this time with a furtive memory of love-making in them, and responded decidedly, 'No, it is not.'

'Sir,' she continued, turning to the Admiral, 'Mr. Rodda is coming this afternoon to break this to you.'

'Break it to me!' irascibly exclaimed the Admiral. 'How many more things am I to have broken to me this day? I should like to break a thick stick to these fellows! Why can't they stick to their engagements as I do? Precious attractive they seem to find you two young women. I wonder you are not ashamed, Lyndis, to come and tell me that your fellow has given you the slip too.'

'Oh, I say!' expostulated Roscoria, and he dared—before the Admiral—to put his arm round Lyndis's waist.

'Look at them, sir!' said Rosetta, in a motherly aside. 'I'd go to the rack with Spanish fortitude before I would cross young love.'

'Lieutenant Tregurtha!' announced the footman, and in came Dick with an air of Bless you, my children! about him. He was stopped on the very threshold, though, by recognising in Miss Rosetta Villiers a dear, if new, attraction.

'Hallo!' he exclaimed. 'Why, this *is* delightful, you know!' and shook her warmly and long by the hand.

Rosetta ordered a fresh glass for the sherry, and Lyndis inhaled the odour of the hyacinths in the flower-stand, whilst Roscoria bent over her, earnestly engaged in making his peace. The Admiral, who had been quelled for the moment, burst out afresh. In trembling accents he said, waving his hand:—

'Ladies, leave us, if you please!' and Lyndis and Rosetta, knowing what impended, hastily made for the door, Roscoria finding time to bow out his adored just before Sir John broke into a torrent, a storm, hurricane, gust, squall, half-gale, great-guns-blowing (or any other nautical simile) of language.

The young men listened with respectful disapprobation (for to attempt to stem the course of the Admiral's diction was at all times dangerous). When the sea-faring gentleman's invention was somewhat ebbing, Tregurtha was in an undertone acquainted with its source. The moment when it seemed of any use, Roscoria began again on his suit. He pleaded, urged, lost his temper, found it again, represented, reasoned, chaffed the Admiral, appealed to his friend—and all in vain. Lyndis was steadily denied to him.

'And Miss Rosetta?' asked the Lieutenant; but this question, which to him was most important, got lost, as totally irrelevant to the matter in hand. In despair the tired and heated Roscoria was led gently away by his friend, and the moment they appeared out of doors they were cheered by the sight of the ladies, who were waiting in the garden.

'It has not gone well with you, has it, Louis?' asked Lyndis anxiously.

'Gone well! It has gone vilely, Lyndis. Why do you encourage such a curmudgeon of a peppery old Cambyzes as an uncle?'

'My relative, if you please, sir,' said the loyal Lyndis. 'Why do you get us all into such scrapes, you inconsiderate, duped Hotspur?'

'Because I am in love, most beautiful; they say it affects the intellect. So tell me what we are to do now.'

'Well—would you like to give me up?'

'Don't,' prayed the lover, with an imploring gaze at his goddess. 'Say something cheering, for—eh! it *was* warm in there.'

Lyndis nodded her beautiful head sagaciously, passed her hand over Roscoria's forehead, smoothing it, and smiled to herself to see how his countenance cleared under the comfort.

'Dear one, to me you are an Immortal,' he said reflectively; 'but—if you *have* an age, what might it be?'

'That will not do,' said Lyndis; 'a minor I am, and a minor I fear I shall remain for a year or two more. But if you will wait——'

Louis threw out his arms with a gesture of impatience. 'I had rather run away with you at once,' he said. 'Let us elope.'

'Mr. Roscoria, what a very rash idea!'

'Should you refuse, if I asked you?'

'I hope so,' said Lyndis, thereby giving her lover much hope. 'And now, as I am really angry with you, you may go.'

'Yes, goddess; but I will hear thee again on this matter. May I——'

Lyndis did not expressly say he might not, so he did—that is to say, he kissed the golden head that was resting on his rough coat, from whence it was raised with tumbled bright hair spread abroad like the rays of the sun.

Tregurtha and Rosetta meantime had been looking over a hedge, commenting on scenery, the weather, and the crops. Rosetta was a born farmer. The sailor asked her tentatively:—

'Did you agree to this plan of marrying my friend Roscoria?'

'I did,' said the maiden brightly.

'But surely you scarcely knew him well enough to love him? There must have been a strong elective affinity—or, bless me! I can't account for it.'

'Love him! I never had spoken to him,' laughed Rosetta.

'You would not have given him your hand without your heart?' persisted Tregurtha, with a strange pained look, which, alas! she did not understand.

'Why, yes. If I had added my heart, think how great the sacrifice would have been. As it was, it was *very* amusing.'

Rosetta laughed again, at Roscoria this time, who came up to apologise for the awkward position in which he had stupidly placed her.

‘Never mind, Mr. Roscoria,’ answered she. ‘I love adventures, and I owe this one to you. Only next time you ask for Miss *Lyndis* Villiers, let me advise you—“*see that you get her.*”’

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME.

FOR a fortnight after this failed attempt Roscoria beat his brains in vain to hit on a method of squaring the Admiral. He was debarred from any sight of *Lyndis* herself, for Sir John, cleverly enough, had spirited the goddess off to her mother in London, so that her lover might chafe in the chains of his exacting profession until perhaps, being unable to follow, he might cease to love her.

Having executed this little piece of justice on his sworn foe Roscoria, the Admiral turned mighty good-humoured, and found that he lacked a companion over pipe and bowl. As he had quarrelled for life with almost all the residents in Devonshire, it was natural that the choleric but cheery old fellow should turn his eye on Dick Tregurtha—a stranger, a sailor, a pleasant companion, and a man who could oppose a front of imperturbable and respectful good-humour to any high-handed impertinence which the Admiral’s temper might offer him.

This distinction suited Tregurtha uncommonly well. He liked the Admiral, and he liked the Admiral’s niece. He did not see much of Miss Rosetta Villiers, for that damsel was always either attending to the farm or preparing for an examination. But she occasionally looked in upon the men, and had bright smiles for Richard, and a plate of fruit sometimes. She teased the Admiral (who was completely under her rule). Sir John evidently liked and understood Rosetta. *Lyndis* was a complete puzzle to him. He could appreciate a fine woman; but *Lyndis* was more; she was a fine lady, and far too calm-spirited for the Admiral’s taste. She was afraid of him and his imperious way, and he knew it, and took a malicious pleasure in avenging himself on her indifference by startling projects of matrimony for her, accompanied by violent reprimands, which *Lyndis* took with a calm disdain coupled with fear.

Now, when he presumed to scold Rosetta, she first would melt

into a regular child's fit of tears (which used to cause the Admiral to clear his throat and blink his eyes, and retract certain over-fierce expressions); then she would flash into a little Spanish passion, pay the Admiral back in some of his own coin, with the genuine stamp upon it, and quickly send him to the right-about. And this the Admiral understood too, for he was a man who knocked under with a good grace when fairly worsted. Tregurtha was never weary of hearing the two joke together, and noting occasionally how, when the Admiral wickedly strove to turn the joke against Rosetta herself or her sex, the young lady would throw her uncle a glance of her black eyes that shone with such masterful warning that the old commander would cough and change the subject, whilst Rosetta broke into a young, irrepressible laugh of victory.

Tregurtha commended himself to the lady by offering his help in the mathematics she required for her examinations. The logic which she also studied was at first beyond his ken, but he got over that difficulty by causing Roscoria to give him a fearful jorum of Jevons every evening, which he then passed on to the pretty student. Rosetta was much impressed; she marvelled at the wide and varied talents of a mind that had remembered all the details of logic during a rough sea-faring life like Tregurtha's. But if she admired his qualities, how was he affected by hers? Ah! that's the worst of it, always.

For, said Dick to Roscoria one afternoon, as that distinguished preceptor was on the point of joining his adoring disciples:—

'Wish me good luck, old comrade; I am off on a forlorn hope.'

'That child?' cried Roscoria, dropping an armful of the Clarendon Press series with resounding bangs upon the floor.

'That child!' intoned Tregurtha mechanically, with the voice of a captive spirit from a tomb. 'I feel it is utterly hopeless madness; but I shan't be ashore much longer, and I must go to sea with a certainty behind me. I was never a man to go doubting when knowledge could be had for the asking. So I'll go and have my mind set at rest. I shall be satisfied this evening, I trust, and then I'll come back to you, Roscoria.'

'Yes, you are sure of me, at any rate. I'm afraid you are making a mistake, old fellow; but I dare say you can't help it.'

Pythias whistled sympathetically as Damon went out by the window with his hat over his brows and his teeth set.

Rosetta Villiers was playing about in the Admiral's garden.

At least, she thought she was working, but the sun was hot and there was a pleasant shade under that chestnut-tree. So she left off weeding and tying up roses, and sat dreamily down on a wooden seat to divide her attention between a book and a flitting dragon-fly. Tregurtha came walking informally through the garden, for was he not hand-in-glove with the Admiral? Rosetta looked up brightly, extended her Jevons in smiling appeal, and pointed to the other end of her rustic sofa.

'I'm not up to logic to-day, dear Miss Villiers,' said Tregurtha with quiet despondency; 'I have brought you a problem harder to solve than any in that class-book of yours. Do throw it over the hedge for half an hour, for indeed it is not opportune!'

Rosetta's astonishment was instructive to see. She clasped the book tighter and said breathlessly, 'You are strange, Mr. Tregurtha. Sit down here, and please don't look at me like the reproachful manes of my grandfather! There, at any rate, it is only a despairing profile that I see—the full face was unendurable.'

'Just allow me,' said Tregurtha, and he put Stanley Jevons into his pocket. 'There! now I have no rival save the landscape. I say, listen, Miss Villiers. I—oh! but you will never understand—you will not understand!'

'I will do my best,' said Rosetta, with a childish touch of pride. 'Am I so stupid?'

'My little Rosetta, no!' cried Tregurtha, with an access of tenderness which overwhelmed him; 'but this is something which mere cleverness will never teach you, and which I cannot explain to you. Roscoria could have done it,' he sighed, 'but I am an inferior creature; besides, I shall only be speaking out my own disappointment. Well, best have it over; after all it won't take long. Rosetta, how do you think of me?'

'As my friend,' answered Rosetta promptly.

'Ah! and all the time I am only your lover!'

'My lover!'

'Say what you like now, I am ready,' groaned Tregurtha, with hopeless resolution.

There was a long, dreary pause. Rosetta sat still, gazing away over the sunny lawn, and Tregurtha cared not even to see her answer in her face—he knew it; he looked before him also, and listlessly their thoughts dwelt on the daisies, the butterflies playing above them, the shifts of light and shadow, and the birds' half dream-like song.

'Oh, this is dreadful!' Rosetta at last broke out. Richard drew her nearer, and kept his arm round her, saying quietly:—

'I am sorry I distress you.'

'Oh, I wish I could suffer anything! I wish anything evil could have happened to me, if only I might not have hurt you so! I did not know it, Richard, I did not know it!'

'No, of course I saw that. You are no flirt, sweetheart, or you would never have been troubled with me. Oh, well, it is over now—the worst part at least—and you must not be too soft-hearted, darling; you will have to break some hearts soon, so steel your own!'

Rosetta gave a long, long sigh, like a child roused from deepest sleep. All this was so new to her, such a revelation of pathos, and herself so helplessly ignorant and unprepared, that she had never a word to say, and all her sixteen bright years of life seemed unreality before this woeful fact—her lover. Involuntarily she laid her head upon Tregurtha's shoulder as if he could help her: then, with a start, as she felt the tremor that went through him at her touch, she raised it up, and bent her startled eyes upon him while she said, so low, with such an effort:—

'I ought to try and tell you why I cannot—marry you. But what am I to say? I can find nothing reasonable. You would in your turn fail to understand the fancies of a child like me.'

'I should like to hear,' said Tregurtha. 'Talk to me as long as you will; say what you please to me; I should like to take back some little knowledge of you, instead of the shadowy hope which has now gone to range itself with the endless mass which space is not great enough to hold—men's illusions.'

His bitterness seemed to make his distress so real for Rosetta that she gave a deprecating cry and struggled with herself for several moments before she found heart to continue speaking. Then tremulously she asked:—

'Should you care to marry me before I could love you?'

'I don't know,' said Tregurtha. 'Now I am bewildered by my own love for you.'

'Listen, Mr. Tregurtha. I am only sixteen, as you know, and childish for that age. I have lived so much alone and so wrapped up in my examinations and out-of-door pursuits that I simply have never yet had occasion to think of marriage. You see, I have no lady relatives, except Lyndis—and she is so serious! I imagined

love would find its own way to me, without my playing with it beforehand. *Now* I see it needs practice.'

'Did the Admiral never warn you of your future lovers?' here put in Tregurtha, with some incredulity.

'Oh, the Admiral! Who cares what the Admiral says? He's an old sailor, what can you expect? They think of nothing else in connection with us women.'

Tregurtha gave vent to a dismal chuckle at Rosetta's not altogether far-fetched aphorism on the navy. He was scarcely in a position to controvert it.

'And so you paid no attention?'

'Not much,' said Rosetta, blushing. 'At least, I never dreamt that a man would love me yet, and that I should not be able to return his sentiment. I relied for the contrary on my Southern nature, and troubled my head no more about it. Indeed, I used to think that I should like to have a lover, and now—now he is come!'—and Rosetta covered her face and broke into low, sad sobbing.

'Oh, you poor little child! And I have done you harm, blundering into your charmed circle of heart freedom! What a shame it is!'

Tregurtha rose up from his seat and stood stretching his arms out with a laugh of self-directed irony; before this good and innocent girl, with all her sorrow for him, he felt utterly baffled, hopeless, and cast back.

'Let me try to explain myself further,' pleaded Rosetta, with as much eagerness as if it were her fault that she could not love Tregurtha.

'See, I am happy here. To some people it is not given to know when they are happy, but I do know. I rejoice in my existence. I want nothing save that love which is beautiful in poetry and tragical in life. Here I am useful; you know the Admiral—his dear, quarrelsome ways—who can keep him in order except me? Why, if I did not act as his interpreter there would never be a farm labourer on the place; every ploughboy and cowman on it would give the Admiral notice to-morrow if—I did! Here is my home, too: I love it. I love every corner of this old-fashioned garden—the corner where the winter-violets grow, the nooks to find snowdrops in, and the borders with the scented pinks and heart's-ease in irregular places. I look for each flower as it comes out, and I scarcely care to stray outside our sweet-briar hedge.'

‘Well, dear child, all I can possibly say is, that it all sounds very pretty. If I were not your lover, I should exclaim, “How simple are her tastes! what innocence and what content!” I should look on, were another in my place, and say complacently, “Here is at last a woman who does not court men’s admiration. Here is a fair maid who prefers Jevons’s ‘Elements of Logic’ to Debrett’s ‘Peerage,’ and a bunch of mignonette to a tiara of diamonds.” How new, how picturesque, and how refreshing!’

Rosetta gazed in blank wonderment at the embittered Richard, who, with arms folded and a caustic frown, was haranguing away as if to conjure from him a whole army of demons.

She was not of a mould to stand by and see another really suffer.

‘I will do something for you, Richard!’ she cried at length. ‘My lover shall not think me hard. I will go with you, Richard, and let the Admiral and the cowmen console each other. Between you and your friend it seems as if I were never to be left alone. Well, I am ready; I have plenty of spirit, and I say I will learn the meaning of this love which has made a hypochondriac of my sailor friend. I will be your wife and try to make the best of it—if it will make Richard himself again.’

She stopped, excited but steadfast. Tregurtha, with a last laugh of amused wretchedness, said:—

‘Señorita! no one could deny that you are brave and ready; but beware of your adventurous spirit. You are forgetting what kind of man it is to whose rescue you would hasten. Why, I would sooner a shark should devour me on my next voyage than that I should have to think of you as a patient martyr—you, my—my— Oh, good gracious, what a fool I am! My dear Rosetta, go back to your happiness. When the Fates mean you to love, you will—and then—I envy the man! But till then, recollect that there is nothing so hopeless as mistaken heroism. Shun it, pretty one, as you would all evil; for it is a peculiar danger to you women. My darling, shall we shake hands? for I am going.’

‘And you will not come again? I shall miss you so!’

‘I’ll write and let you know about that,’ said Tregurtha.

She stood opposite him, murmuring pathetic words in Spanish. Then she caught her breath, and was silent. A man who knew her less would have thought she really loved him.

'Richard, you should have waited, I believe!' she exclaimed, as by sudden inspiration.

'What do you say?'

'While there is life there is hope; but in sailors, they tell me, there is not always constancy,' meditated Rosetta aloud.

'Not always, dear; only sometimes. Once would be enough for us. But do you know where you are leading me? For Heaven's sake, Rosetta, don't say anything you do not mean!'

'I take back my words, Richard. Perhaps I lost my way in this darkness. I am not well informed in these matters.'

'No, dear, so I see,' answered Tregurtha gently, as the high hope of an instant died in his breast forgotten.

'And you have my "Logic" still in your pocket,' suggested Rosetta, melting again into tears.

'So I have! There—don't cry any more to-day. To-morrow I give you leave to cry, because you will then have forgotten all about it. Shall I tell you, señorita, who should have been your lover instead of me?'

'Please,' whispered Rosetta, ashamed but curious.

'Job,' said Tregurtha solemnly; and, the sailor nature being too strong for him, he kissed her lips, then left her under her chestnut-tree and went away, nor ever looked behind him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WAY WE BEHAVE WHEN WE ARE YOUNG.

It was past midnight, and the summer moonlight sparkled on the waves as a little boat, with its sail puffed out by a brisk breeze, came gliding, conspirator-like, towards that part of the Braceton domain that runs along by the sea.

It was the night after Roscoria's school broke up, and the first use the master made of his holiday was this—to arrange to run off with Miss Lyndis. There seemed nothing else to be done; the Admiral would not yield, the lady would not change her mind, and the lover would not be content to wait. So the young people exchanged letters, and the result was this boat. Tregurtha was in the affair as well, though he strongly disapproved of it. His love of adventure had conquered his conscience; and he was, besides, confident that Roscoria would end all by a blunder if not backed by a cool-headed friend.

So here was Tregurtha, steering the boat into a certain safe and sandy cove well in the shadow, where he knew that the eye even of an Admiral could not penetrate, whilst Roscoria fetched his lady. Roscoria's heart was on land before his legs, and again and again had he mounted in spirit up that steep pathway, up the cliffs from the beach to the side of the house, where there would be one light in a window, one wakeful inmate to steal out to him through the unbolted shutters and the gate she would have left ajar.

'Are we late?' he asked his friend.

'No, early,' said Tregurtha.

'Will she be ready?'

'I have no means of knowing, my dear fellow.'

'What are we to do if she is not?'

'Wait.'

'The boat ground on the pebbly beach, and Dick admonished the lover *sotto voce*—

'Don't—now *don't* sentimentalise on the way; every minute is valuable; the Admiral is not deaf, and the lady's box is sure to be heavy.'

Roscoria was off like a chamois-hunter. Tregurtha sat on the beach and smoked a pipe, stretching his legs in great tranquillity. Not that he was ignorant that Rosetta's window also had a light in it, but he knew it did not shine for him, and, considering all things, he thought it wiser to look in the opposite direction.

It was soon, in reality, that two figures began to descend the cliff-path. Roscoria first, bearing a modest trunk on his shoulder, and looking back each moment to see if Lyndis knew her way in the moonlight.

Lyndis herself was muffled up in a large cloak. She did not seem at all nervous. All that Tregurtha noticed, as she stepped into the boat and bade him 'good evening' with a sort of pathetic courtesy, was that her figure stood straight and firm, and that she trod the rocks in the uncertain light with Devonshire decision.

The lieutenant was secretly a trifle shocked by the coolness of the young couple. Feeling himself the incarnation of duplicity and insubordination, he would have liked a more remorseful attitude in the fugitives themselves.

'How do you do, Miss Villiers?' said Tregurtha, doffing his

sou'-wester politely; and at that moment he chanced to look up at the house and saw the little solitary light go out.

Rosetta also had found a fearful joy in the adventure. She would dearly have liked the moon-lit row for herself, or, failing that, would fain have waved her hand to Richard—but here conscience stepped in. She therefore watched the party from behind her curtain until she saw them safely into the boat, and took a last critical glance at her own lover, preferred him to Roscoria, blew out the light, and—probably went to sleep; for indeed she had quite cheered up, and Dick had been right in saying that she would only weep one day for his sorrow. Tregurtha smiled mournfully to himself as he reflected that the fiery southern natures may excel us in warmth of feeling, but we of the colder north can beat them in constancy.

They pulled off from shore, after a few instants of great anxiety, because of the pebbles' traitorous noise; and then they made an energetic start. The thoughts of the trio were concentrated on putting distance between themselves and the possibility of pursuit. Lyndis steered until the men lost their first vigour, when she took the place of one of them and rowed with the enterprise of an ancient Phœnician. At first she felt a delicacy in taking thus active a part in the escape, but this finally vanished when she looked at Roscoria spreading out his cramped fists in smiling relief whenever she stood up to take his oar.

They had passed the sharp cliff 'Gallantry Bower,' and began to feel the creeping shiver that heralds the dawn. By the mixed and twinkling light from the fading moon and the glimmering East they were thinking they could discern a suspicion of white houses in the bay for which they were making, when Roscoria, who happened just then to be resting with his hands on the rudder-lines, exclaimed:—

'By Heaven, I see a boat!'

'No supernatural phenomenon upon the sea,' said Richard, looking out, however, with some uneasiness. Lyndis heaved a deep sigh, and failed for the first time to draw her oar through the water.

'Well, we have the start, if it should be the Admiral. It is a case of speed, and the devil take the hindmost. Oh, good gracious, Lyndis! I forgot he was your relation! Change places with me again, and guide us well into the small bay there. Pull for our happiness, Tregurtha!'

On land! The three voyagers broke into varying expressions of relief.

'By Jove, I feel as if I had been reading the "Agamemnon!"' cried Roscoria, stretching out his arms exhausted.

'Thank Heaven!' said Lyndis.

'Good,' said Dick.

The cold morning light was growing brighter and more encouraging as, after drawing the boat high on to the shingle, the trio proceeded quickly towards a certain white and towered edifice. As might be expected, this was their goal—a church. Lyndis looked rather blankly as they approached this termination, and lagged behind with Roscoria.

'Would you two mind walking in front?' sang out Tregurtha without looking round, but with a sternness caused by his sense of complicity. They did so, and the wedding procession moved on much quicker.

At the church gate they were greeted by Eric Rodda, the curate here. He was so ingeniously unselfish (*i.e.* self-tormenting) a man that he had insisted on being the one to give his loved Lyndis to the man she loved.

'Well, every man has his particular fancy; but it puts *me* in a precious unpopular position,' Roscoria had thought, whilst accepting the magnanimity.

'All right?' asked Rodda then of his patients, victims, clients, or whatever those wights are called on whom the parson pronounces the matrimonial benediction.

'For the present,' replied Roscoria.

'Then come along,' said Eric, and he led the way into the little rustic church. It was a picturesque old-fashioned place, evidently the resort of the ritualistic, for there were lighted candles on the altar and great bunches of scented flowers. The flowers lent a charm to the church and gave a memory of the fresh outer air, from which one is apt to feel so desolately shut out when encased within consecrated walls. The candles, also, were much needed, for the windows were stained in such deep red and purple tints that an early morning sun could hardly pierce the painting. The people present at this unconventional wedding were, besides the chief couple and their 'best man' Tregurtha, Eric, the parson, who now surged gorgeously in from the vestry with flowing gown and ponderous prayer-book; the elderly and orthodox clerk or verger, who followed with a mien of severe desire to see a tiresome ceremony properly performed; then, lastly, an aged crone of the sweeping and dusting persuasion, on whose neck Lyndis would fain have wept, in default of another woman.

But our brides shed no tears nowadays. The times are unemonstrative, and thus the drooping veil, whose original use was to conceal unbecoming traces of tears, now only serves to soften the marble rigidity of resignation. Who that has once seen it can ever forget the Iphigenia-like air of beauty at the hymeneal! And then the wretched bridegroom! Whether he stands trembling before the statuesque bride, or kneeling, with the shiny soles of his patent-leather boots in view, what an advertisement to his bachelor friends against matrimony!

The present wedding was more cheery than most, however. Roscoria was fairly cool, but that was partly because he had not been able to afford a new coat for the auspicious occasion. Lyndis, to be sure, though she was marrying (unlike the generality of brides) a man she loved, and this, moreover, in defiance of her guardian's wishes—a circumstance which must have lent an additional charm to the deed—Lyndis stood looking white, white and terrified; all her own rashness and the inevitable uncertainty of her future filling her thoughts. Her head was bent and her fingers clasped, and nervously bent back; she was retaining every atom of her self-control, but saying what she had to say mechanically, with a low voice, like the echo of her own sighing through cloister aisles.

'Cheer up, my darling!' said Louis in an audible whisper, just as the clergyman opened his mouth.

'Dearly beloved—*hush!*' began Eric Rodda; and even Lyndis, with all her chastened 'amazement,' could not resist a smile.

Tregurtha had given the bride away; Roscoria had at last found the ring, wrapped carefully up in his fly-book; names had been duly signed with atrocious pens in the vestry; and the bridegroom saluted the bride. But to do this last it was not essential to call in the verger as witness, so the young people left Tregurtha and Rodda behind and took a merry run in the sunshine, down-hill towards the village. And as they danced along on the dewy grass, with their arms interlaced and their laughing improvident young faces upturned one to the other, they turned a sharp corner and Lyndis gave a little scream of horror, for she had nearly fallen into the arms of the Admiral!

As long as he lives, Roscoria swears, he shall never forget how he was feeling whilst Lyndis shrank back with outstretched averting hands, exclaiming tremulously:—

'My dearest uncle! this—this is an unexpected pleasure!'

'Lyndis Villiers—you wretched woman.'

'You are twenty minutes behind the times, Sir John,' interposed Roscoria, stepping in front of the lady. 'Lyndis is Mrs. Roscoria.'

'Have you married her?' gasped the Admiral, still too much done for even to swear.

'I—I—did—I have. Oh, Rodda!' appealed the bridegroom, as the curate came up with Tregurtha, 'fetch the Admiral the certificate, and beg him to be calm for the sake of Lyndis!'

It was evident that the Admiral was in great perplexity. He saw he was too late.

'And *you* permitted this, you scoundrel!' he roared, turning upon Tregurtha with fury. Richard flushed up; he had been afraid of this. He simply saluted and said humbly:—

'I can only ask your pardon, sir; we have all behaved very badly.'

'Ha! yes, my niece Rosetta knows a scamp when she sees one. Confound you, sir!' and the Admiral turned his back upon his shamefast subordinate. He confronted Roscoria, and this time with a peculiar expression of malicious gratification under his rage. After all, when your next-door neighbour has run away with your niece, there is an unique joy in the thought of how he shall reap the whirlwind. Sir John put up his eye-glass and surveyed the husband of his niece from head to foot with a smile.

'Well,' said Roscoria, with an air of buoyant courtesy, which passed but poorly with his stammering, 'I'm awfully sorry we have brought you so far after us—but—since you are here—would you?—may we request the honour?—we have ordered breakfast at the "Red Lion."'

That was going too far. The Admiral gave one of his snorts, grasped his cane, and absolutely shook it in the face of the speaker. In another instant there would have been a row royal, and the preliminary electric thrill went through the whole party. Lyndis stepped in. She softly removed Roscoria's protective hand from off her shoulder, and said with decision:—

'Let me speak to him, Louis.'

The men withdrew a little as she went across to the infuriated Admiral, and said to him:—

'Sir John, dear, we do not want to defy you, and we never did. But indeed there was nothing to be said against the owner of Torres, except that he was poor. Was I also poor? Well, then, I was accustomed to a simple mode of life, and, bless my soul!

that is all I have to fear; there is no starvation in the case. Perhaps I should have behaved differently, but, dear Sir John, am I not young? I loved him. And in any case, here I am, Roscoria's wife. My marriage cannot be overlooked; would it be seemly? Why not go home without any scandal, and be thankful that you are rid of a charge that I fear has been very troublesome to you. And you will go to the "Red Lion" first, will you not? and have some breakfast apart from us. Dear sir, think of Rosetta's feelings—and of my inextinguishable remorse—if you were to take a chill! Come, let me walk a piece of the way with you; the men will follow. That you should have come out on this rough sea so early in the morning! That is the only thing which shadows my happiness. I do not ask your forgiveness, but I *should* like your portrait—the one in uniform, of course—you will send it me, will you not? Yes?’

Lyndis bent her ruffled golden head and looked into his face with her sweet starry eyes. Now, the Admiral had never been inaccessible to the wiles of lovely woman, and Lyndis had never before cared or dared to coax him. He began for the first time to see that there was something else in the girl beyond a fine figure. And thus it came that he put his hand furtively into his pocket and said, grumbling and awesome, but relenting:—

‘You’re my own brother’s child unluckily, so here’s ten pounds for your honeymoon. You will remember that I have made an effort—and a very considerable one it was, too, for an old gentleman of sixty—to bring you back to your duty; if I am too late, you may blame your own cunning for that, when in future days you may wish this morning’s work undone. Begad, I will make it warm for your husband! He wasn’t set down on the next estate to mine for nothing. There—there—a pleasant trip to you, girl; I cannot congratulate you on your choice, but we must hope for the best; good morning!’

Lyndis returned to her husband in tears, but the Admiral and his fleet were defeated off Clovelly.

Then Tregurtha discovered that there was only just time for the newly wedded to breakfast at the inn before the coach should be arriving which was to convey them to Barnstaple, where they were to take train for Penzance. So up the main street of Clovelly went the wedding party.

The informal little wedding breakfast had a far cheerier air than the funereal orthodox ones. Instead of being presided over by awful footmen and hired waiters, the quartet was served by

one sympathetic maid, who brought them an honest rustic repast of eggs and bacon, buttered cakes, and Devonshire cream, tea, and cider. It was all wonderfully Arcadian, and the little room was very pretty with its walls covered with old china and the creepers forcing their way in through the open window. Lyndis shone on the occasion.

Nor was there any time for sentiment, nor any ghastly speeches. Tregurtha did indeed raise his tea-cup, with a bow to Lyndis and a wink to Roscoria, and endeavour to drink its contents off at a draught, but, burning his mouth, he was forced to desist.

Then Roscoria was bound to pour out a glass of cider and say:—

‘My dear fellows, I am heartily obliged to you, and now let me propose *my* toast. (By the way, Tregurtha, have you considered the pungency of the fact that the Greeks use the same word for “trouble” and “wife’s relations”?) Where was I? Oh, yes; allow me to propose the health and good-humour and indemnity from chill, of my revered and feared uncle-in-law, Admiral Sir John Villiers, K.C.B.’

‘Poor old fellow,’ said Tregurtha reflectively; ‘I hear him stamping about overhead. I hope he has got all he wants; I shall go and take him a stiff glass of grog.’

He did so, and returned with a smiling but battered expression.

‘Is he any cooler?’ anxiously inquired the bridegroom.

‘Cooler? Molten lead—the torrid zone—a powder-magazine in full explosion—the furnaces of Nebuchadnezzar—are about as cool as is the Admiral at this moment. I should like to see you two clear out of this, lest he change his mind, and bring the whole population of Clovelly down upon you.’

Lyndis paled visibly and rose.

‘How ever did he know we were off?’ she asked.

‘Yes, how indeed!’ demanded Tregurtha of his friend. Roscoria looked up and Roscoria looked down, and Roscoria finally admitted in a whispered aside:—

‘Lyndis was rather fluttered, Dick, and so I kissed her—by mistake—just under the Admiral’s window.’

‘Good luck to you and your ship, captain!’ said Roscoria, with that air of ill-sustained buoyancy which we all adopt during the *mauvais quart d’heure* of parting.

'Good-bye, Corydon,' said Dick, and wrung his friend's hand. 'Be off, or you'll miss the coach.'

Lyndis and Roscoria walked away together up the steep path to the high road; Rodda had made himself scarce, and Tregurtha stood alone.

There is an advantage here and there when your friend marries and you don't. He keeps a more luxurious table as a rule, and you are sure of a match-box and hot water in your bedroom when you visit him. On the other hand, there is something eternally gone; the old frank confidence *à deux* grows yearly more difficult, and you can never more be 'boys together.'

On that day a week later Captain Tregurtha was off again to sea, in command, in a measure through the Admiral's interest, of a fine ship, the 'Damietta.'

Rosetta, who did not see the captain again before he went, has taken first-class honours in the Junior Cambridge Exam. of the year (Logic being specially commended), and she has now entered upon an engrossing project in conjunction with the Admiral for the importation of some 'Hereford' white-face cattle on to the Braceton farm. She connects a storm vaguely with danger to lovers, but she rarely thinks of Dick in calm weather.

Admiral Sir John Villiers bides his time. Τὸ μέλλον ἤξει, and when Roscoria comes home to cane his boys he will live to find a rod in pickle for himself. But little recks the lover of the future thunders, for he is living under a cloudless sky. Unlike most folk of the present day, Lyndis and Roscoria have rushed headlong into matrimony; and if consequences *will* fall heavy—why, let them! they say, as they blissfully, economically, and appropriately roam amongst the myrtles in the Scilly Isles.

PERCY ROSS.

At the Sign of the Ship.

MR. STEVENSON'S new book—which these eyes have been privileged to see in proof—is in some ways his best. The material is inferior to that of 'Treasure Island'—is not that common yet eternal stuff of romance which counts for so much in the interest and charm of the older story; nor have the adventures of David Balfour that element of plot which attaches us so closely to the study of those of Jim Hawkins and Long John. But the whole thing is full of delightful invention, and is touched, besides, with a humanity which I do not think that Mr. Stevenson has ever realised before. The manner of the book is, of course, the manner of Defoe; by which I mean that there is, as in 'Robinson Crusoe,' perhaps a little too much psychology, especially the psychology of suffering. The two heroes, Allan Beck and David, have a dreadfully hard time of it, and their aches and pains and tribulations are, it may be, a trifle too well realised. One thinks with a sigh of the cheerful and gallant fancy of Dumas; of the smiling indifference to the details of hunger and fatigue which distinguishes the experiences of Chicot and D'Artagnan. But, for all that—and in apology thereof it must be observed that the present is nothing if not realistically inclined—the impression of the book is thoroughly generous and honourable. In two passages at least—the Fight in the Round House and the Quarrel in the Heather—Mr. Stevenson has surpassed himself in the matter of brilliant and affecting narrative—has gone higher, indeed, than is within the flight of any of his contemporaries—and produced a couple of chapters that are *tout bonnement* a couple of masterpieces. As for the style—a most quaint, elegant, and delightful compromise between Scotch and English—it recalls, with certain differences, the manner of Jedediah Cleisbotham (of Gandercleugh), and is good enough, as it seems to us to take high rank and live long as a literary creation. By this time everybody has read the book, no doubt, and—to pass to the

dedication—has asked for information concerning ‘that great society, the L. J. R.’ What was the L. J. R. in effect? and to what end were those meetings at which it ‘drank its beer, sitting in the seats of Burns and his companions?’ Perhaps Mr. Stevenson will oblige? Or his happy friend, the dedicatee?

W. E. H.

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After a month nearly vitrified by the heat of the weather and the ardour of politics, an inconsecutive writer naturally looks about for some questions that are not blazing. Mr. Burnand once invented riddles for hot weather. ‘My first is a boot, my second is a fish (in *very* hot weather say a jack), my whole is——’ obvious to the meanest capacity even in the most heated terms. A cool unexciting topic, especially in August, seemed to be the future of the British Novel. Mr. Shand has been discoursing of this in the *Fortnightly Review*. One need not accept all his facts and all his conclusions: for example, there is not a definite, certain twopence of profit on a shilling novel. One shilling novel differs from another in magnitude. One may contain a hundred and seventy widely printed pages, another may hold two hundred and thirty pages of closely printed matter. It is evident that the expenses of the former will be much smaller, and the profits, supposing sales equal, proportionally greater.

* * *

Without accepting all Mr. Shand’s views, then, it may be granted that ‘the novel business’ is not in the best possible condition. To the young gentleman or lady about to commence novelist one would whisper ‘Beware!’ and counsel some attention to statistics. In the first place, Sir or Madam, do you propose to use novel writing as a staff or a crutch? Can you live even if your books be a failure? According to the Old Man, even Nicholas, ‘literature is only respectable when combined with some other avocation, such as not being employed at the bar.’ A glance at the weekly advertising columns of the literary papers will show that perhaps one novel out of fifty is even moderately successful. In the last ten years any one of mature age can remember some five great ‘hits,’ and perhaps twenty stories which paid their authors about half or a quarter as well as they would have been paid for equivalent success at the Bar, in Medicine, in Business, and about an eighth as well as if the triumph had been won on the stage. Compare the pecuniary profits of ‘Called Back,’ or ‘John Inglesant,’ or even, in better days, of ‘Romola,’

with those of *Our Boys* or *The Private Secretary*. Again, without going into figures too invidiously, contrast the probable income of the most successful living novelist with the income of a dull, plodding man who is in good practice at the Bar. The money balance is all against the bright romanticist, even at his best. The chances that any beginner will ever reach the foremost rank are almost incalculably adverse. And even in the foremost rank the profits are scanty, in comparison with the rewards of other professions. Why, in fiction, there are not half a dozen such good things as a county court judgeship or an inspectorship of schools.

* *

As the human demand for instruction is less ardent than the demand for amusement, the pecuniary reward of even the luckiest novelist seems slight. We hear of fortunes made in France by novelists like M. Zola and M. Daudet. Why is similar luck so very, very rare in England? Why do M. Zola and M. Daudet do so much better than our Englishman of letters, like Mr. Trollope, who was also a man of business? This is a mystery. No economist has fathomed it. Certainly the French system of publishing novels is infinitely more simple than the English system. Novels are usually sold in one volume, at a price rather over half-a-crown, say three-and-sixpence, adding the expense for a plain binding. Of this half-crown the author receives a royalty—fourpence, or fivepence, or only twopence, according to his popularity and the demand for his books. Say he sells eighty thousand copies of a novel (and M. Ohnet, M. Zola, M. Daudet, often sell far more), and he makes about 1,400*l.* at a royalty of fourpence. This is exclusive of the price paid for the serial publication of the tale as the *feuilleton* of a newspaper. Most French newspapers have their novel running, and, on the whole, it will appear that a successful French novelist has rather a profitable business, especially as he often dramatises his tale, and reaps the rich rewards of the theatre. But though the facts are patent, no one has yet discovered *who buy* the eighty thousand or one hundred and twenty thousand copies of 'Sappho' or 'Serge Panine.' I never saw a Frenchman buy a novel at a railway station, or read anything but a newspaper. This, then, is the great mystery. But it is certain that their half-crown books do sell, somehow, and it is certain that the British novel's sale is limited to the brief and accidental demand of the circulating libraries. Mr. Mudie is at the bottom of our English woes—Mr. Mudie and the conventional price of thirty-one shillings and sixpence for the conven-

tional three volumes. Mr. Shand thinks that, if publishers could agree and combine, and, above all, if fictitious trash were not published at the author's expense, then we might have a system of cheap novels like the French, of novels with a large sale. I doubt it, and I am sure, whatever Mr. Shand may think, that Victor Hugo's tales were never published 'in folios.' Both his and Flaubert's saw the light in large octavos. But a novel in folio! It is incredible.

* * *

There remains one important reason why novels as a rule do not sell very well, either in three volumes, or at a shilling, or in the French form. As a rule, novels are not very well worth buying. A good book, and a book that takes the public, will do excellently in any shape, just as a good horse never yet was of a bad colour. Unless the commencing novelist feels with the intuition of genius that he can do something immensely better than the average, he had better leave the business alone. The earnings are small, the mortifications numberless, and the neophyte must not even dream of fame, or expect pleasant society to welcome him as the author of half a dozen romances of the usual type. A certain place, paved with good intentions, is full of such romances.

* * *

Successes are very rare indeed, and we all envy them, but Bre'r Fox, in a modern literary fable, might 'allow' with some truth that the grapes are often sour. It would be easy to write a lament on the Sorrows of a Success. A young man makes a hit in literature, and his name, yesterday unknown, is to-day in every one's mouth, and in the *Morning Post* among those who attend the banquets and participate in the caresses of the Great. How very jolly we think; all we toilers and spinners, hewers of wood and drawers of water, the Children of Gibeon of Literature! But it is not all jollity. To be envied, and begrudged, and censured, to have a hundred people declaring that you went up like a rocket and will come down like the stick, is exceedingly irksome. I can conceive no position more anxious than that of the author who, having once scaled the peaks of success, is attempting a second flight. *He* knows very well what is being prophesied about him by his rivals, and he knows that those predictions, like the threats and ill words of witches, have a trick of seeming their own fulfilment. This consciousness interferes with the freedom of his powers in working. In an amusing

little tract, 'Hints on Golf,' Mr. Horace Hutchinson mentions that you can put a player off his play by remarking, 'How very unusually well you are making your iron strokes just now! Can you account for it in any way?' This causes your opponent to feel a certain trepidation when he takes his iron in hand—the spontaneity of his action is checked, and perhaps he loses the game. Now, the consciousness of unfriendly, jealous watchers may, or must, affect the writing of a successful beginner, still all in a flutter at the march of his own triumph. He knows what people are saying. They say that his book was a 'fluke,' that he hit on a happy thought and cannot recover such another, that he just happened to seize a topic which was coming into fashion; they say he is overrated, they speak about a *tour de force*, and forget that *ne faict ce tour qui veult*. They also insinuate that the whole story, or the best of it, was old, and has been stolen, or borrowed, and they imply that *they* could do as well were they not too honest to borrow. I hardly remember a recent success which has not been denounced as a tissue of borrowings. It is odd that when borrowing is so easy and profitable we do not all convert ourselves from jays into peacocks.

* * *

These were the very charges that were brought, in the days of his early triumphs, against the great Molière. Almost every contemporary scrap of gossip about Molière has been reprinted. But I do not remember, in the editions of M. Despois, or in the collections of the good Bibliophile Jacob, to have met with the remarks published by Donneau de Visé, in the preface to his *La Cocue Imaginaire* (À Paris. Chez Jean Ribou, sur le Quay des Augustins, à l'Image S. Louis, Paris, M.DC.LXII.) *La Cocue Imaginaire* is, of course, a travesty, or converse rendering, of Molière's *Le Cocu Imaginaire*. The interest of it now lies only in the preface, which gives an account of Molière's first Parisian victories, and a defence of his genius—a genius to which De Visé was not always friendly. 'People came to Paris from twenty leagues round,' he says, to see the *Précieuses Ridicules*. Then arose the usual outcry, and the drama of success had its chorus of the envious. Some said that only the notoriety of the *Précieuses* at the moment made the play succeed. They added that it was stolen from the *Précieuses* of the Abbé de Pure. But as, in spite of the said 'notoriety,' De Pure's work was a failure, these two modes of attack neutralised each other. If the subject made the merit, why did not De Pure succeed? There is

never a popular new play or novel but a dozen people say it was stolen from a novel or play which was not popular at all. Then the critics observed that one swallow did not make a summer, that the *Précieuses* was a 'fluke,' that the next piece would be a 'frost,' as actors say now. The next piece, *Le Cocu*, was played in midsummer, when *Paris semble désert*, and when the King's marriage seemed to have drawn all the Court out of town. Yet there were gentry enough left to fill the seats on the stage, and *bourgeois* enough left to fill the pit, during a run of forty nights—a long run in those days and in the summer weather. Molière triumphed, but only genius can hold its own against all the perils which beset the new man of a sudden success. The ambitious beginner must remember that he has not only to take the town once, but that he will be obliged to fight for his place, unless he would sink from the lion of a single season into the nonentity of the next, and find that his Muse becomes *passée* in a day, while mortal beauties retain their charms and their adorers. What other profession is so precarious as this of letters, to which men are led, most of them by vanity, many by a notion of liberty and an easy life, a few, only, by true vocation and the tyranny of their genius? Many are called, few chosen; many carry the thiasus, few are the mystics. Yet the troubles of this career are chiefly of the world, and its consolations are spiritual, if we follow the Muses for the love of them, as King Honour wooed his lady, and neither for laud nor fee.

* * *

How long may a human being live in perfect possession of his faculties and powers for good or evil? The question is important to all. Conceive a statesman with a despotic power of influencing men's wills who should last as long as Old Parr! Think of a beauty who might eclipse the maidens of each fresh season, and whose *hesternæ rosæ* should outglow their fresh loveliness, as long as Ninon de l'Enclos was a toast, or Marion Delorme, to whom Balzac assigns 130 years! History, social or political, would be altered; the whole progress of humanity might be advanced for æons or retarded by one man, who varied from the kindly race of men and lived twice as long as his oldest neighbour. If we may believe a curious old French book, 'History of Persons who have lived for many Ages, and grown young again' (Paris, 1716), this fancy is not wholly absurd or impossible. All Europe expects great changes from the deaths of Prince Bismarck, of Von Moltke, of the Emperor. How would all Europe look if

they retained their vigour till, say, 1950? Before the Deluge such lives would have seemed prematurely cut short at 150. And since the Deluge? Hereon our French author enlightens us with learning from Pliny, Cornaro, and Phlegon of Trallæ. Thus Fohi, the founder of the Chinese Empire, *reigned* 115 years, and so did Apaphus of Thebes Egyptian, but *he*, surely, was the son of Zeus! Antiochus Epiphanes died at 149! A king of the Ommanians lived to 115, but that was in Arabia Felix. Tacitus gives 175 years to Tuisco, a German prince. Daddon, an Illyrian noble, lived for 500 years, according to Alexander Cornelius. Anacreon gives Cinyras of Cyprus 100 years, and Arganthonius, a Spaniard, saw 150 summers. According to Bonfinius, Attila was 124 when he died of the consequences of a revel on the night of his marriage—his second marriage. How long had he lamented his first consort? Epimenides was 157 (others say 299) at his regretted decease. At 100 Euphranor gave up taking private pupils. Sophocles perished, by an accident, at 130. The Apocrypha mentions the circumstance that Mattathias died by misadventure at 146. The Countess of Arundel (temp. Charles I.) employed a Mrs. Gamp of 123. Thus, even in its natural way, we need never despair of any man attaining say 130, a pleasant thought in the case of really great men, whose lives are useful to their country. Why, we might have Cromwell with us yet! Of the Fountain of Youth another time will best serve to speak.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of a P.O. for £1 from Mrs. T., and the following subscriptions: T. D., Battersea, 2s. 6d.; S. A. A., £10.

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